FOUR GIRLS AT CHAUTAUQUA

BY "PANSY"

Thelma
Russell
Nokomis
Ill

The Four Girls.

FOUR GIRLS

AT

CHAUTAUQUA.

BY

PANSY.

AUTHOR OF "ESTER REID," "JULIA REID," "THREE PEOPLE," "THE KING'S DAUGHTER," "WISE AND OTHERWISE," "HOUSEHOLD PUZZLES," "CUNNING WORKMEN," "GRANDPA'S DARLINGS," &c.

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FOUR GIRLS AT CHAUTAUQUA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCED.

EURIE MITCHELL shut the door with a bang and ran up the stairs two steps at a time. She nearly always banged doors, and was always in a hurry. She tapped firmly at the door just at the head of the stairs; then she pushed it open and entered.

"Are you going?" she said, and her face was all in a glow of excitement and pleasure.

The young lady to whom she spoke measured the velvet to see if it was long enough for the hat she was binding, raised her eyes for just an

instant to the eager face before her, and said: "Good-morning."

"Ruth Erskine! what are you trimming your hat for? Didn't it suit? Say, are you going? Why in the world don't you tell me? I have been half wild all the morning."

Ruth Erskine smiled. "Which question shall I answer first? What a perfect interrogation point you are, Eurie. My hats never suit, you know; this one was worse than usual. This velvet is a pretty shade, isn't it? Am I going to Chautauqua, do you mean? I am sure I don't know. I haven't thought much about it. Do you really suppose it will be worth while?"

Eurie stamped her foot impatiently. "How provoking you are! Haven't thought of it, and here I have been talking and coaxing all the morning. Father thinks it is a wild scheme, of course, and sees no sense in spending so much money; but I'm going for all that. I don't have a frolic once in an age, and I have set my heart on this. Just think of living in the woods for two whole weeks! camping out, and doing all sorts of wild things. I'm just delighted."

Miss Erskine sewed thoughtfully for some seconds, then she said:

"Why, there is nothing in the world to hinder my going if I want to. As to the money, I suppose one could hardly spend as much there as at Long Branch or Saratoga, and of course I should go somewhere. But the point is, what do I want to go for?"

"Why, just to be together, and be in the woods, and live in a tent, and do nothing civilized for a fortnight. It is the nicest idea that ever was."

"And should we go to the meetings?" Miss Erskine asked, still speaking thoughtfully, and as if she were undecided.

"Why, yes, of course, now and then. Though for that matter I suppose father is right enough when he says that precious few people go for the sake of the meetings. He says it is a grand jollification, with a bit of religion for the background. But for that matter the less religion they have the better, and so I told him."

At this point there was a faint little knock at the door, and Eurie sprang to open it, saying as she went: "That is Flossy, I know; she always gives just such little pussy knocks as that." The little lady who entered fitted her name per-

fectly. She was small and fair, blue-eyed, flossy yellow curls lying on her shoulders, her voice was small and sweet, almost too sweet or too soft, that sort of voice that could change when slight occasion offered into a whine or positive tearfulness. She was greeted with great glee by Eurie, and in her more quiet way by Miss Erskine.

"*I'm* going," she said, with a soft little laugh, and she sank down among the cushions of the sofa, while her white morning dress floated around her like a cloud. "Charlie thinks it is silly, and Kit thinks it is sillier, and mamma thinks it is the very silliest thing I ever did yet; but for all that I am going — that is, if the rest of you are." Which, by the way, was always this little Flossy's manner of speech. She was going to do or not to do, speak or keep silent, approve or condemn, exactly as the mind which was for the time being nearest to her chose to sway her.

"Good!" said Eurie, softly clapping her hands. "I didn't think it of you, Flossy; I thought you were too much of a mouse. Now, Ruth, you will go, won't you? As for Marion,

there is no knowing whether she will go or not. I don't see how she can afford it myself any more than I can; but, of course, that is her own concern. We can go anyway, whether she does or not — only I don't want to, I want her along. Suppose we all go down and see her; it is Saturday, she will be at home, and then we can begin to make our preparations. It is really quite time we were sure of what we are going to do."

By dint of much coaxing and argument Ruth was prevailed upon to leave her fascinating brown hat with its brown velvet trimmings, and in the course of the next half hour the trio were on their way down Park Street, intent on a call on Miss Marion Wilbur. Park Street was a simple, quiet, unpretending street, narrow and short; the houses were two-storied and severely plain. In one of the plainest of these, wearing an unmistakable boarding-house look, in a back room on the second floor, the object of their search, in a dark calico dress, with her sleeves rolled above her elbows, had her hands immersed in a wash-bowl of suds, and was doing up linen collars. She was one of those miserable creatures in this weary world, a teacher in a

graded school, and her one day of rest was filled with all sorts of washing, ironing and mending work, until she had fairly come to groan over the prospect of Saturday because of the burden of work which it brought. She welcomed her callers without taking her hands from the suds; she was as quiet in her way as Ruth Erskine was in hers.

This time it was Flossy who asked the important question: "Are you going?"

Marion answered as promptly as though the question had been decided for a week.

"Yes, certainly I am going. I thought I told you that when we talked it over before. I am washing out my collars to have them ready. Ruth, are you going to take a trunk?"

Ruth roused herself from the comtemplation of her brown gloves to say with a little start:

"How you girls do rush things. Why, I haven't decided yet that I am going."

"Oh, you'll go," Marion Wilbur said. "The question is, are we to take trunks — or, rather, are you to? because I know *I* shall not. I'm going to wear my black suit. Put it on on Tuesday morning, or Monday is it that we start?

and wear it until we return. I may take it off, to be sure, while I sleep, but even that is uncertain, as we may not get a place to sleep in; but for once in my life I am not going to be bored with baggage."

"I shall take mine," Ruth Erskin said with determination. "I don't intend to be bored by being without baggage. It is horrid, I think, to go away with only one dress, and feel obliged to wear it whether it is suited to the weather or not, or whatever happens to it. Eurie, what are you laughing at?"

"I am interested in the phenomena of Marion Wilbur being the first to introduce the dress question. I venture to say not one of us has thought of that phase of the matter up to this present moment."

While the talk went on the collars and cuffs were carefully washed and rinsed, and presently Marion, with her hands only a trifle pinker for the operation, was ready to lean against a chair and discuss ways and means. Her long apprenticeship in school-rooms had given her the habit of standing instead of sitting, even when there was no occasion for the former.

If these four young ladies had been creatures of the brain, gotten up expressly for the purpose of illustrating extremes of character, instead of being flesh and blood creations, I doubt whether they could have better illustrated the different types of young ladyhood. There was Ruth Erskine, dwelling in solitary grandeur in her royal home, as American royalty goes, the sole daughter, the sole child indeed of the house, a girl who had no idea of life except as a place in which to have a serenely good time, and teach everybody to do as she desired them to. Money was a commonplace matter-of-course article, neither to be particularly prized nor despised; it was convenient, of course, and must be an annoyance when one had to do without it; but of that, by practical experience, she knew nothing. Yet Ruth was by no means a "pink-and-white" girl without character; on the contrary, she had plenty of character, but hitherto it had been frittered away on nothings, until it looked as much like nothing as it could. She was the sort of person whom education and circumstances of the right sort would have developed into splendor, but the development had not taken

place. Now you are not to suppose that she was uneducated; that would be a libel on Madame La Fonte and her fashionable seminary. She had graduated with honor; taken the first prizes in everything. She knew all about seminaries; so do I; and if you do, you are ready to admit that the development had not come. There is constantly occurring something to take back. While I write I have in mind an institution where the earnest desire sought after and prayed for is the higher development, not alone of the intellect, but of the heart: where the wonderful woman who is at its head said to me a few years ago:

"If a lady has spent three years under my care, and graduated, and gone out from me not a Christian, I feel like going down on my knees in bitterness of soul, and crying, 'Lord, I have failed in the trust thou didst give me." But the very fact that the word "wonderful" fits that woman's name is proof enough that such institutions as hers are rare, and it was not at that seminary that Ruth Erskine graduated. She was spending her life in elegant pursuits that meant nothing, those of them which did not mean worse than nothing, and the only difference between

her and a hundred others around her was that she knew perfectly well that they all amounted to nothing, and didn't hesitate to say so, therefore she earned the title of "queer." At the same time she did not hesitate to lead the whirl around this continuous nothing, therefore she occupied that perilous position of being liked and admired and envied, all in one. Very few people loved her, and queerly enough she knew that too, and instead of resenting it realized that she could not see why they should. She was, moreover, remarkably careful as to her leading after all, and those who followed were sure of being led in an eminently respectable and fashionable way. Her most intimate friend was Eurie Mitchell, which was not strange when one considered what remarkable opposites in character they were. Eureka J. Mitchell was the respectable sounding name that the young lady bore, but the full name would have sounded utterly strange to her ears, the wild little word "Eurie" seeming to have been made on purpose for her. She was the eldest daughter of a large, good-natured, hard-working, much-bewildered family. They never knew just where they be

longed. They went to the First Church, which for itself should have settled their position, since it was the opinion of most of its members that it was organized especially that the "first families" might have a church-home. But they occupied a very front seat, by reason of their inability to pay for a middle one, which was bad for "position," as First Church gentility went. What was surprising to them was how they ever happened to have the money to pay for that seat; but, let me record it to their honor, they always happened to have it. They were honest. They ought to have been called "the happen family," by reason of their inability to tell how much or how little they might happen to have to live on, whether they could afford three new dresses apiece or none at all. The fact being that it depended on the amount of sickness there was in Dr. Mitchell's beat whether there were to be luxuries or simple bare necessities, with some wonderment as to how even those were to be paid.

Eurie was the most light-hearted and indifferent of this free-and-easy family, who always had roast turkey when it was to be had, and who

could laugh and chat merrily over warmed-up meat and johnny-cake, or even no meat at all, when such days came. How she ever came to think that she could go to Chautauqua was a matter of surprise to herself; but it happened to have been a sickly summer among the wealthy people, and large bills had come in — the next thing was to spend them. Chautauqua was a silly place to do it in, to be sure; that was Dr. Mitchell's idea, and the family laughed together over Eurie's last wild notion; but for all that they good-naturedly prepared to let her carry it out. Just how full of fun and mischief and actual wildness Eurie was, a two-weeks sojourn at Chautauqua will be likely to develop; for before that conversation at Marion's was concluded they decided that they were really going. Why Marion went, puzzled the girls very much, puzzled herself somewhat. She was her own mistress, had neither father to direct nor sister to consult. She had an uncle and aunt who lived where she called "home," and with whom she spent her vacations, but they were the poorest of hard-working country people, who stood in awe of Marion and her education, and by no

means ventured to interfere with her plans. Marion was as independent in her way as Ruth was in hers, but they were very different ways. Ruth, for instance, indulged her independence in the matter of dress, by spending a small fortune in looking elegantly unlike everybody else, and straightway created a frantic desire in her set to look as nearly like her as possible. But no one cared to look like Marion, in her severely plain black or brown suits, with almost and sometimes quite no trimmings at all on them. It was agreed that she looked remarkably well, but *so* unlike any one else they didn't see how she could bring herself to dressing so. She laughed when this was hinted to her, and got what comfort she could out of the fact that she was considered "odd." In a certain way she ruled them all, Ruth Erskine included, though that young lady never suspected it. The queerest one of this company was little Flossy Shipley — queer to be found in just such company, I mean. She was the petted darling of a wealthy home, a younger daughter, a baby in their eyes, to be loved and cherished, and allowed to have her own sweet and precious way, even when it in-

cluded such a strange proceeding as a two weeks in the woods, all because that strange girl in the ward school that Flossy had taken such an unaccountable fancy for was going. This family were First Church people, too, and capable of buying a seat very near the centre, in fact but a few removes from the Erskine pew, which was, of course, the wealthy one of the church. The Shipley pew was rarely honored by all the members of the family, and indeed the pastor had no special cause for alarm if several Sundays went by without an appearance from one of them. A variety of trifles might happen to cause such a state of things, from which you will infer that they were not a church-going family. Another strange representative for Chautauqua!

Now how did those four girls come to be friends? Oh, dreadful! You don't expect me to be able to account for human friendships I hope, especially for school-girl friendships? There is no known rule that will apply to such idiosyncracies. They had been in school together, even Marion Wilbur, with the indomitable energy which characterized her, had managed one term of Madame La Fonte's enormous bills, and

with the close of the term found herself strangely enough drawn into this strange medley of character that moved in such different circles, and yet called themselves friends. You are to understand that though the same church received these girls on Sunday, yet the actual circle in which their lives whirled was as unlike as possible. The Erskines were the cream, cultured, traveled, wealthy, aristocratic as to blood and as to manners, literary in the sense that they bought rare books, and knew why they were rare. The Mitchells had a calling acquaintance with their family because Dr. Mitchell was their chosen physician, but that came to pass through an accident, and not many of the doctor's patrons were of just the same stamp. This family never went to the Erskine entertainments, never were invited to go to the other entertainments starting from the same circle, yet they had their friends and many of them. The Shipleys were free-and-easy, cordial, social, friendly people, who bought many books and pictures, and were prominent in fairs and festivals, and were popular everywhere, but were not, after all, of the Erskine stamp. Finally came Marion, alone, no position any

where, save as she ruled in the most difficult room in the most difficult ward in the city. A worker, known to be such; a manager, recognized as one who could make incongruous elements meet and marshal into working order. In that capacity she found her place even in the First Church, for they had fairs and festivals, and oyster suppers, and other trials even in the First Church; and there was much work to be done, and Marion Wilbur could work.

And these four girls were going to Chautauqua — were to start on Monday morning, August 2, 1875.

CHAPTER II.

THE QUESTION DISCUSSED.

REV. DR. DENNIS and Rev. Mr. Harrison met just at the corner of Howard and Clinton Streets, and stopped for a chat. Dr. Dennis was pastor of the First Church, and Mr. Harrison was pastor of the Fourth, and some of the sheep belonging to these respective flocks supposed the two churches to be rivals, but the pastors thereof never thought of such a thing. On the contrary, they were always getting up excuses for coming in contact with each other; and woe to the work that was waiting for each when they chanced to meet of a morning on some shady corner.

"You are to be represented, I hear, at the coming assembly," said Mr. Harrison, as they shook hands in that hearty way which says, as

plainly as words, "How *very* glad I am to see you!"

Dr. Dennis shrugged his shoulders.

"Such a representation!" he said. "If the entire congregation had been canvassed, it would have been impossible to have made more curious selections. I do wish we could have some real workers from the different churches."

"Miss Erskine isn't a member of the church, is she?"

"None of them are members, nor Christians; nor have they an atom of interest in any such matters. They are going for pure fun, and nothing else."

"Now perhaps they will happily disappoint you by coming back with a wholesome interest aroused in Sunday-school work, and will really go into the work for themselves."

"I don't want them," Dr. Dennis said, stoutly. "I wouldn't give a dime for a hundred such workers; they are an injury to the cause. I want Sunday-school workers who have a personal, vital sense of the worth of souls, and a consuming desire to see them converted. All other Sunday-school teaching is aimless."

Mr. Harrison looked thoughtful.

"We haven't many such, I am afraid," he said, gravely; but I agree with you in thinking that they should at least be Christians. Still, I suppose that it is not impossible that some one of these ladies may be converted."

"Not at Chautauqua," Dr. Dennis said, as one who had looked into the matter and knew all about it. "I am not entirely in sympathy with that meeting, anyway; or, that is, I am and I am not, all at once. I think it would be a grand place for you and me. I haven't the least doubt but that we would be refreshed, bodily and mentally, and, for that matter, spiritually. If the whole world were converted I should vote for Chautauqua with a loud voice; but I am more than fearful as to the influence of such meetings on the masses — the unconverted world. *They* will go there for recreation. Their whole aim will be to have a glorious frolic away from the restraints of ordinary home-life. They will have no interest in the meetings, no sympathy with the central thought that has drawn the workers together, and the tendency will be to frolic through it all.

"The truth is, there will be such a mixing of things that I actually fear the effect will be wholesale demoralization. At the same time I am interested in the idea, and am watching it with anxiety. Since I have heard of the delegation from my own church I have been more convinced still of the evil influences. It makes me gloomy to think of the fruitful field such a place will be for the fertile brain of that little Eurie Mitchell. She is too wild now for civilized life. The four walls of the church and the sacred associations connected with the building serve to keep her only half controlled when she is actually attending Sabbath service. There will be nothing to control her in the woods, and she will lose what little reverence she possesses. I tell you, the more I think of it, the more certain I am that for such people these great religious jubilees, holding over the Sabbath, do harm."

"You put it more gently than our friend Mr. Archer," Mr. Harrison said, smiling. "He is in a condition of absolute scorn. He gives none of them credit for honesty or genuine interest. He says it is a running away from work, a regular shirking of what they ought to be doing, and go

ing off into the woods to have a good time, and, by way of gulling the public, they pretend to season it with religion."

Dr. Dennis laughed.

"That sounds precisely like him, and is quite as logical as one could expect, coming from that source," he said, indifferently. "Why doesn't it occur to his dull brain, that thinks itself such a sharp one, that the leaders thereof are men responsible to no one save God and their own consciences for the way in which they spend their time? There is nothing earthly to hinder their going to the woods, and staying three months if they please to do so."

"Oh, but I have left out one of the important reasons for the meeting. It is to make money; a grand speculation, whereby the fortunes of these same leaders are to be made at the expense of the poor victims whom they gather about them."

Again Dr. Dennis' shoulders went upward in that peculiar but expressive shrug.

"Of all the precarious and dangerous ways of making a fortune, I should think that went ahead," he said, still laughing. "What an idea

now! Shouldn't you suppose people with common sense would have some faint idea of the immense expenses to be involved in such an undertaking, and the tremendous risks to be run? If they succeed in meeting their expenses this year I think they will have cause for rejoicing."

"The point that puzzles me," Mr. Harrison said, "is what particular commandment would they be breaking if they should actually happen to have twenty-five cents to put in their pockets when the meeting closed; though, as you say, I doubt the probability. But they force no one to come; it is a matter for individual decision, and they render a fair equivalent for every cent of money spent; at least, if the spender thinks it is not a fair equivalent he is foolish to go; so why should they not make enough to justify them in giving their time to this work?"

"Of course, of course," assented Dr. Dennis, heartily; "they ought to; none but an idiot would think otherwise."

It is to be presumed that both these gentlemen had gotten so far away from the name that was quoted as holding these views as to forget all

about him, else they certainly would not have been guilty of calling a brother minister an idiot, however much his arguments might suggest the thought.

"But," continued Dr. Dennis, "my trouble lies, as I said, in the results. I have no sort of doubt that great good will be done, and I have the same feeling of certainty that harm will be done. Take it in my own church. We are so situated, or we think ourselves so situated, that not a single one of the earnest, hearty workers who would come back to us with a blessing for themselves and us, is able to go; instead, we have four representatives who will turn the whole thing into ridicule, and dish it up for the entertainment of their friends during the coming winter.

"That Miss Erskine seems to have a special talent for getting up Thursday evening entertainments, to invite our people who are supposed to be interested in the prayer-meeting, but who rarely fail to make it convenient to go to the party. I imagine a bevy of them being entertained by Eurie Mitchell. She can do it, and she is looking forward to just that sort of thing.

for I heard her rejoicing over it. That girl will be injured by Chautauqua; I know it as well as though I already saw it; and the question with me is, whether the amount of evil done will not overbalance the good. At the same time I am inconsistent enough to wish with all my heart that I could be there."

"What about Miss Shipley? Perhaps relief will come to you from that quarter."

Those shoulders again.

"She is nothing in the world but a little pink feather, and she blows precisely in the direction of the strongest current; and Satan looks out for her with untiring patience that the wind shall blow in the exact direction where it can do her the most harm. Going to Chautauqua with the influences that will surround her, with Miss Erskine and Miss Wilbur on the one side, and Eurie Mitchell on the other, will be the very best thing that Satan can do next for her, and he doubtless knows it."

"I do not know Miss Wilbur at all. Is she also one of your flock?"

Dr. Dennis' face was dark and sad.

"She is an infidel," he said, decidedly. "She

does not call herself such; she wouldn't like to be known as such, because it would be likely to affect her position in the school. But the name is rightly hers, and she would do less harm in the world if she owned it."

"It is an extraordinary representation, I declare," Mr. Harrison said, a little startled. "I have been half inclined to be envious of you because you were to hear so directly from the meeting, but I believe on the whole I shall be quite as well off without any delegates as you will with them."

"Better, decidedly. I am distressed at the whole thing. It will result disastrously for them all, you mark my words."

And having settled the affairs at Chautauqua, apparently beyond all repeal, the brethren shook hands again and went to their studies.

Meantime the express train was giving occasional premonitory snorts, and the four young ladies who had been so thoroughly discussed were in various stages of unrest, waiting for the moment of departure. A looker-on would have been able to come to marked conclusions concerning the different characters of these young

ladies, simply from their manner of dress. Flossy Shipley was the one to look at first. That was a very good description of her usual style—something to look at. She had chosen for her traveling dress a pale, lavender cashmere, of that delightful shade that resents a drop of water as promptly as a drop of oil. It was trimmed with a contrasting shade of silk, and trimmed profusely; yards of gathered trimming, headed by yards of flat pleating, and that in turn headed by yards of folds. The dainty sack and hat, and the four-buttoned gloves, were as faultless as to fit and as delicate in color as the dress. In short, Miss Flossy looked as though she might be ready for an evening concert. Moreover, she felt as if she were, or at least she had an uncomfortable consciousness as to clothes. She kept a nervous lookout for the lower flounce whenever the crowd of people surged her way, and brushed vigorously at the arm of the seat she had chosen ere she dared to rest *her* arm on it. Evidently she had given herself over to the martyrdom of thinking of and caring for clothes during this journey, and I don't know whether there is a greater martyrdom made out of a trifle than

that. It was one of Flossy's besetting sins, this arraying herself in glory, and making wrinkles in her face in the vain attempt to keep so. Not that she was particularly anxious to save the wear and tear, only she hated to look spotted and wrinkled, and she could never seem to learn the simple lesson of wearing the things best suited to the occasion.

Standing near her, toying carelessly with her traveling fan, and looking as though the thought of dress was something that had passed utterly by her, was Miss Erskine. She looked like one of those ladies whom gentlemen in their wisdom are always selecting, pointing them out as models. "So tasteful and appropriate, and withal so simple in their dress."

Let me tell you about her dress. It was plain dark brown, precisely the shade of brown that the fashion of the season required. It was of soft, lusterless silk. It was very simply made, almost severely plain, as Miss Erskine knew became a traveler. In fact, elegant simplicity marked her entire toilet, everything matched, everything was fresh and spotless, and arranged with an eye to remaining so. I am willing to concede that she was faultlessly dressed, and it

was a real pleasure to see her thus. But I am also anxious to have the gentlemen understand that that same simple attire represented more money than two wardrobes like Flossy Shipley's. It is often so with those delightfully plain and simple dresses that attract so many people. In fact, it might as well be admitted, since we are on that subject, that elegant simplicity is sometimes a very expensive article.

Eurie Mitchell was neither particularly elegant nor noted for simplicity, yet her dress was not without character. We see enough of that sort to become familiar with what it means. Its language is simply a straightened purse, necessitating the putting together of shades that do not quite harmonize, and trimming in a way that will cover the most spots and take the least material. That was Eurie's dress. Skirt of one kind and overdress of another. A very economical fashion, and one not destined to last long, because of its economy, and the fact that very elegant ladies rather curl their lips at it, and call it the "patchwork style." Eurie from necessity rather than choice adopted it, and it was also her misfortune rather than her taste that the colors

were too light to be really according to the mode. Her gloves were of an entirely different shade from the rest of the attire, and were mended with a shade of silk that did not quite match Altogether, Eurie's dress did not suit Miss Erskine. But, for that matter, neither did it suit herself, with this difference, that it was, after all, a matter of minor importance to her.

Miss Wilbur's dress can be disposed of in a single sentence: It was a black alpaca skirt, not too long, and severely plain, covered to within three inches with a plain brown linen polonaise; her black hat with a band of velvet about it, fastened by a single heavy knot, and her somewhat worn black gloves completed her toilet, and she looked every inch a lady. The very people who would have curled their aristocratic lips at Eurie's attempt at style, turned and gave Miss Wilbur a second thoughtful respectful look.

There was a Mr. Wayne who deserves attention. He possessed himself of Miss Erskine's fan, and played with it carelessly, while he said:

"You are a queer set. What are you all going off there for, to bury yourselves in the woods? I don't believe one of you has an idea what you

are about. And it is the very height of the season, too."

"That is the trouble," Miss Erskine said, with a little toss of her handsome head. "We are sick of the season, and want to get away from it. I want something new. That is precisely what I am going for."

"I have no doubt you will find it," and the gentleman gave a disdainful shrug to his shoulders. "Out in the backwoods attending a hallelujah meeting! I am sure I envy you."

"You don't know what we will find," Eurie Mitchell said, with a defiant air. "Nor what may happen to us before we return. We may meet our destinies. I have no doubt they are lurking for us behind some of the trees. Just you meet the evening train of Wednesday, two weeks hence, and see if you can not discover the finger of fate having been busy with us. Wonderful things can happen in two weeks."

Just then the train gave its last warning howl, and Mr. Wayne made rapid good-bys, a trifle more lingering in the case of Miss Erskine than the others, and with that prophetic sentence still ringing in his ears he departed. And the four girls were actually *en route* for Chautauqua.

CHAPTER III.

ENTERING THE CURRENT.

IT is a queer thought, not to say a startling one, what very trifles about us are constantly giving object lessons on our characters. Those four girls, as they arranged themselves in the cars for their all-day journey conveyed four different impressions to the critical looker-on. In the first place they each selected and took possession of an entire seat, though the cars were filling rapidly, and many an anxious woman and heavily laden man looked reproachfully at them. They took these whole seats from entirely different stand-points — Miss Erskine because she was a finished and selfish traveler; and although she did not belong to that absolutely unendurable class, who occupy

room that is not theirs until a conductor interferes, she yet regularly appropriated and kept the extra seat engaged with her flounces until she was asked outright to vacate it by one more determined than the rest. She hated company and avoided it when possible. Flossy Shipley was willing, nay, ready, to give up her extra seat the moment a person of the right sort appeared; not simply a cleanly, respectable individual — they might pass by the dozens — but one who attracted her, who was elegantly dressed and stylish looking. Flossy would endure being crowded if only the person who did it was stylish. Miss Wilbur was indifferent to the whole race of human beings; she cared as little as possible whether a well-dressed lady stood or sat; so far as she was concerned they were apt to do the former. She neither frowned nor smiled when the time came that she was obliged to move; she simply *moved*, with as unconcerned and indifferent a face as she had worn all the time. As for Eurie Mitchell, she took an entire seat, as she did most other things, from pure heedlessness; any one was welcome who wanted to sit with her, and whether it was a servant

girl or a princess was a matter of no moment. These various shades of feeling were nearly as fully expressed in their faces as though they had spoken; and yet they did not in the least comprehend their own actions. This is only an illustration; it was so in a hundred little nothings during the day. Not a window was raised or closed for their benefit, not a turn of a blind made, that a close student of human nature could not have seen the distinct and ruling differences in their temperaments, no matter from what point of the compass they started. In the course of time they reached East Buffalo.

"Now for our dinners!" Eurie said, as the whistle shrieked a warning that the station was being neared. "What are we going to do?"

"We are going to eat them, I presume, as usual," Miss Erskine said in her most indifferent tone. I should explain that long before this the girls had grown weary of the separate seats, and by dint of much planning and the good-natured removal of two fellow passengers to other seats had accomplished an arrangement that should naturally have been enjoyed from the beginning: that of a turned seat, and being their own seat-mates.

"But I mean," Eurie said, in no wise quenched by what was a common enough manner in Miss Erskine, "are we to get a lunch, or are we to go in to a regular dinner?"

"If you mean what *I* am going to do, I shall most assuredly have a 'regular' dinner, as you call it. I have no fancy for eating things thrown together in a bag."

"The bag will be the most economical process for all that," Eurie said, laughing at Miss Erskine's disdainful face.

"I presume very likely; but as I did not start on this trip for the purpose of studying social economy, I shall vote for the dinner."

"And I shall take to the bag method," Eurie said, decidedly. Opposition always decided her. So it did Flossy, though in a different way; she was sure to side with the stronger party.

"It would be pleasanter for us all to keep together," she began in a doubtful tone, looking first at Miss Erkine and then at Eurie.

"But since, according to Eurie's and my decided differences, it is impossible for us to do the "better" thing, which of the two *worse* things are you going to do?" This Miss Ers-

kine said with utmost good nature, but with utmost determination — as much as it would have taken to carry out a good idea in the face of opposition.

"Oh, I think I'll go with you." Flossy said it hastily, as if she feared that she might appear foolish in the eyes of this young lady by having fancied anything else.

"Very well — then it remains for Marion to choose her company," Eurie said, composedly.

Marion held up a paper bundle.

"It is already chosen," she said, promptly. "It is a slice of bread and butter, with a very thin slice of fat ham, which I never eat, and a greasy doughnut, the whole done up in a brown paper. This is decidedly an improvement on the bag dinner (which you think of going after) in an economical point of view; and as I am a student of social and all other sorts of economy, not only on this trip but on every other trip of mine in this mortal life, I recommend it to you; at least I would have done so if you had asked me this morning before you left home."

Eurie made a grimace.

"I might have brought a splendid lunch from

home if I had only thought of such a thing," she said, regretfully. "My thoughts always come afterward."

"And it is quite the mode to take lunches with you when they are elegantly put up," Flossy said, regretfully, as she prepared to follow Ruth. "I wonder we never thought of it.

This last remark of Flossy's set the two girls left behind into a hearty laugh.

"Do you suppose that when Flossy has to die she will be troubled lest it may not be the fashion for young ladies to die that season?" Eurie said, looking after the pretty little doll as she gathered her skirts about her anxiously; for, whatever other qualifications East Buffalo may have, cleanliness is not one of them.

"No," Marion answered, gravely, "not the least danger of it, because it happens to be the fashion for ladies to die at all seasons; it is the one thing that never seems to go out. I am heartily glad that we have one thing that remains absolute in this fashionable world."

Eurie looked at her thoughtfully.

"Marion, one would think you were religious --sometimes," she said, gravely. "You make such strange remarks."

Marion laughed immoderately.

"You ridiculous little infidel!" she said, as soon as she could speak. "You do not even know enough about religion to detect the difference between goodness and wickedness. Why, that was one of my wickedest remarks, and here you are mistaking it for goodness. My dear child, run and get your paper bag before it is time to go; or will you have my slice of ham and half this doughnut? The bread and butter I want myself."

The freshness and novelty of this journey wore away before the long summer afternoon began to wane; the cars were crowded and uncomfortable, and the cinders flew about in as trying a way as cinders can.

None of the girls had the least idea where they were going. They knew, in a general way, that there must be such a place as Chautauqua Lake, as the papers that they chanced to come in contact with had been full of the delights of that region for many months; and, indeed, a young man, earnest, enthusiastic and sensible, who stopped over night at Dr. Mitchell's, and had been a delighted guest at the Chautauqua Assem

bly a year before, had sown the first seeds that resulted in this trip.

He of course could tell the exact route and the necessary steps to be taken; but it had been no part of Eurie's wisdom to ask about the journey thither; she knew how many boats were on the lake, and what kind of fish could be caught in it, but the most direct way to reach it was a minor matter. So there they were, simply blundering along, in the belief that the railroad officials knew their business, and would get them somewhere sometime.

As the day waned, and the road became more unknown to them, and their weariness grew upon them, they fell to indulging in those stale jokes that young ladies will perpetrate when they don't know wnat else to do. As they declared, with much laughter, and many smart ways of saying it, that Chautauqua was a myth of Eurie's brain, or that she had been the dupe of the fine young theological student who had chanced her way, and that the search for paradise would come to naught, pernaps it was not all joking; for, as the hours passed and they journeyed on, hearing nothing about the place of which for the last

few weeks they had thought so much, a queer feeling began to steal over them that there really was no such spot, and that they were all a set of idiots.

"I thought we should have been there by this time, and regularly established at housekeeping," Marion said, as they picked up baskets and bundles and prepared to change cars; "and here we are making another change. This is the third this afternoon, or is it the thirteenth? and who knows where Brocton is or what it is? Is anybody sure that it is in this hemisphere? Eurie, you are certain that your theological student did not cross the Atlantic in order to reach his elysium?"

"Brocton is *here*," Eurie said, as they climbed the steps of the car. "I see the name on that building yonder; though whether 'here' is America or Asia I am unable to say. I think we have come overland, but it is so long since we started I may have forgotten."

But at this point they checked their nonsense and began to get up a new interest in existence. They were among a different class of people — earnest, eager people, who seemed to have no

thought of yawns or weariness. Camp-stools abounded, with here and there a bundle looking like quilts and pillows. Every lady had a waterproof and every man an umbrella, and the talk was of "tents," and "division meetings," and "the morning boats," with stray words like "Fairpoint" and "Mayville" coming in every now and then, These two words, the girls knew had to do with *their* hopes; so they began to feel revived.

"I actually begin to think there is some foundation for Eurie's wild fancies after all," Marion whispered, "or else this is another party of lunatics as wild as ourselves; but they are a large and respectable party; I'm rather hopeful."

In two minutes more the railroad official who speaks in the unknown tongue yelped something at either door, and thereupon everybody got up and began to prepare for an exit.

"Do you think he said Mayville?" questioned Eurie with a shade of anxiety in her voice. She had been the leader of this scheme, and she felt just a trifle of responsibility.

"Haven't the least idea," Marion said, composedly gathering her wrappings; "it sounded

as much like any other word you happen to think of as it did like that, but everybody is going, and Flossy and I are determined to be in the fashion, so we go too."

At the door dismay seized upon Flossy. A light drizzly rain was falling. Oh, the lavender suit! and her waterproof tucked away in her trunk, and everybody pushing and trying to pass her.

"Never mind," Marion said, with utmost good nature, "here is mine; I haven't any trunk, so it is handy; and it has rained on my old alpaca for ages; can't hurt that, so wrap yourself up and come along, for I believe in my heart that this is Mayville."

"This way to the Mayville House," said the gentlemanly official, touching his hat as politely as though they had been princesses. Why can't hotel subordinates more often show a little common politeness? This act decided the location of these four girls in a twinkling; they knew nothing about any of the hotels, and, other things being equal, anybody would rather go to a place to which they had been decently invited than to be elbowed and yelled at and forced.

Water and rest and tea did much to restore them to comfort, and as they discussed matters in their rooms afterward they assured each other that the Mayville House was just the place to stop at. A discussion was in progress as to the evening meeting. Miss Erskine had taken down her hair and donned a becoming wrapper, and reposed serenely in the rocking-chair, offering no remark beyond the composed and decided, "I am not going over in the woods to-night by any manner of means; that would be enough if I were actually one of the lunatics instead of a mild looker-on."

"I haven't the least idea of going, either," Eurie said, sitting on a stool, balancing her stockinged feet against Ruth's rocker. "Not that I mind the rain, or that it wouldn't be fun enough if I were not so dead tired. But I tell you, girls, I have had to work like a soldier to get ready, and having the care of such a set as you have been all day has been too much for me. A religious meeting would just finish me. I'm going to save myself up for morning. You are a goosie to go, Marion. It is as dark as ink, and is raining. What can you see to-night?"

"I tell you I've *got* to go," Marion said, as she quietly unstrapped her shawl. "I earn my bread, as you are very well aware, by teaching school; but my butter, and a few such delicacies, I get by writing up folks and things. I've promised to give a melting account of this first meeting, and I have no idea of losing the chance. Flossy Shipley, you may wear my waterproof every minute if you will go with me. It is long enough to drag a quarter of a yard, and a rain drop can not get near enough to think of you."

"But it is so damp," shivered Flossy, looking drearily out into the night, "and so dark, Marion, I am afraid to go."

"Plenty of people going. What is there to be afraid of? We go down from here in a carriage."

"I wouldn't go, Flossy," chimed in a voice from the rocker and one from the ottoman.

"It will be very damp there," pleaded Flossy, who *did* like to be accommodating.

"You may have ten thicknesses of my shawl to sit on," urged Marion. "Come, now, Flossy Shipley. I didn't have the least idea of coaxing those other girls to go, for every one knows they

are selfish and will do as they please; but I did think you would keep me company. It really isn't pleasant to think of going alone."

The end of it was that Flossy, done up in a cloak twice too large for her, went off looking like the martyr that she was, and Eurie and Ruth staid in their room and laughed over the ridiculousness of Flossy Shipley going out in the night and the rain, in a lavender cashmere, to attend a religious meeting!

CHAPTER IV.

FAIRPOINT.

IT was not so very dark after all, nor so disagreeable as she had imagined. She sat curled up in a heap on the deck of the Col. Phillips, looking with interested eyes on the groups of people, who, despite the rain and darkness, were evidently on their way to Chautauqua. Marion had gone to the other side of the boat and was looking over into the water, rested and interested in spite of herself by the novelty of the scene around her. The fellow-passengers seemed not to be novices like themselves, for as their talk floated to the girls it had sentences like these:

"Last year we stopped in the village, but this time we are going to be right on the ground."

"Last year it rained, too; but rain makes no difference at Chautauqua."

"They are all last year's people," said Marion, coming over to Flossy's side. "That speaks well for the interest, or the fun, doesn't it? Now what do you suppose takes all these people to this place?"

"*I* don't know," Flossy said thoughtfully. "I never thought much about it. Perhaps some of them came just as I did, because the girls were coming and asked me to. I'm sure I haven't the least idea what else I came for."

Marion looked down on the little creature done up in water-proof, with a half-pitying laugh.

"You are a good little mouse," she said patronizingly. "I never remember doing *anything* without a motive somewhere. It must be refreshing to forget that important individual now and then."

"Oh, I don't," Flossy said, simply. "Of course I came for the good time I would have. But then, you know, I would never have thought of coming if the rest of you hadn't."

Another laugh from Marion.

"You let others do your thinking for you," she said, with just a touch of contempt, covered by the gayety of the tone. "Well, it is much the easier way. If I could find anyone to undertake the task, I should like to try it for myself."

Flossy's answer was a little scream of delight, for they were coming upon fairy-land; the lights of Fairpoint were gleaming in the soft distance, and very fairy-like they looked shining among the trees. The sound of music on the steamer mingled charmingly with the peal of the bells from the shore. Marion looked on the scene with quiet interest. Flossy's face took a pink glow; she liked pretty things. As for those who had been at Chautauqua the year before, they gathered at the vessel's side as those gather who, after a long and tiresome journey, realize that they are nearing home. They were eager and excited.

"The dock is better," said one.

"Yes, and the passage way is larger," chimed in his nearest neighbor.

"Oh, everything is on an improved scale this year," said still a third, speaking confidently.

"The *meeting* can't be any better," spoke a

quiet-faced woman, with a decided voice, "that is simply impossible."

Marion laughed softly.

"Hear the lunatics!" she said, bending to give Flossy the benefit of her words. "They are just infatuated; they think this is the original Garden of Eden, with that wretched Eve left out. If she were here I would choke her with a relish." This last in a muttered undertone, too low for even Flossy, and with a darkening face.

Meantime the boat rounded the point, the plank was laid, and the feet of the eager passengers touched the shores of Chautauqua. Some detention about tickets, arising from a misunderstanding of terms, made our girls lose sight and sound of the rest of the boat-load, and when they passed within the railing they found themselves suddenly and strangely alone. A few lights glimmered in the trees, enough to point the way, and from the cottages near at hand streams of light shot out into the darkness; but no sound of footsteps, no sight of human being appeared

> "Over the river, on the hill,
> Another village lieth still,"

quoted Marion, gravely. Then:

"I say, Flossy, what does it all mean? Are we among a party of witches, do you suppose? Where could those congenial spirits so suddenly have conveyed themselves away, I wonder? The road isn't broad, but it most decidedly isn't straight. Only behold that long, long, *long* array of damp and empty seats! Where are the faithful now, do you suppose?"

"There isn't any meeting here to-night, and we might have known there wouldn't be," Flossy said, peevishly, beginning to grow not only disenchanted but half frightened. "I was never in such a queer place in my life! Those white seats all look like ghosts. What could have possessed you to come to-night? Of course they wouldn't have meeting in the rain! Marion, do let us go back; I am frightened out of my wits!"

"You blessed little simpleton!" said Marion, gaily. "What on earth is there to be frightened over? Not pine seats and lamplight, surely, and there is nothing more formidable than that so far."

"I wish with all my heart that I were safely back in the hotel, where I would have been if

you had not coaxed me away," sighed, or rather whined, poor Flossy, shivering with chilliness or nervousness, and added: "Come, Marion, do let us go back with that boat. It can't have started yet."

Marion grasped her hand firmly, and spoke like a commander:

"Flossy Shipley, don't you go to getting nervous and acting like a simpleton, for I won't have it. As for that boat, it is half way to Mayville by this time, and I am glad of it. Do you suppose I am going to make an ignominious retreat now, when we have got so far advanced? Not a bit of it. If there is no meeting, we will go where there ought to be one, since it was advertised, and not a word said about rain. It isn't likely they stay out-doors when it actually pours. Very likely they go in somewhere and have a prayer-meeting. So now compose your nerves and walk fast, for if the spot is within walking distance I am going to find it. I tell you I am to get ten dollars at least for writing up this meeting, and I am going to write it if there is one to write about. If there isn't I shall have to make up one. I dare say I could make

it interesting. I'll put you in if I do, and you shall be Mrs. Fearful — in Pilgrim's Progress, you know — if you don't stop shivering and walk faster."

During this time they had really been making as rapid progress as the up-hill way and their doubt of the road would allow. Flossy made no reply to this harangue, for the reason that a sudden turn in the path brought them into bright light and the sound of a ringing voice.

"There!" whispered Marion as the mammoth tent came in view. "What did I tell you? What do you think of *that* for a prayer-meeting?" And then she, too, relapsed into silence, for the ringing tones of the speaker's voice were distinct and clear. They made their way rapidly and silently under the tent, down the aisle—half way down — then a gentleman beckoned them, and by dint of some pushing and moving secured them seats. Then both girls looked about them in astonishment. Who would have supposed that it rained! Why, there were rows and rows and *rows* of heads, men and women, and even children. A tent larger than they had imagined could be built and packed with people.

Marion's tongue was uncontrollable. She was barely seated before she began her whispered comments:

"That man who is speaking is Dr. Vincent. Hasn't he a ringing voice? It reminds me of a trumpet. He likes to use it, I know he does; he has learned to manage it so nicely, and with an eye to the effect. You will hear his voice often enough, and you just watch and see if you don't learn to know the first echo of it from any other."

"Perhaps he won't be here all the time to use his voice," whispered back Flossy, without much idea what she was saying. The novelty of the scene had stolen her senses.

Marion laughed softly.

"You blessed little idiot!" she said, "don't you know that he manufactured Chautauqua, root and branch? Or if he didn't quite manufacture the trees he looked after their growth, I dare say. Why, this meeting is his darling, his idol, his best beloved. 'Hear him speak?' I guess you will. I should like to see a meeting of this kind that didn't hear from him. It will have to be when he is out of the body."

"How do you know about him?" whispered Flossy, struck with sudden curiosity.

"I've written him up," Marion said, briefly. "I've had to do it several times. Oh, I'm a veteran at Sunday-school meetings. But he is the hardest man to write about that there is among them, because you can never tell what he may happen to say or do next. It will never do to jump at his conclusions, and slip in a neat little sentence of your own as coming from him if you don't happen to have taken very profuse notes, because as sure as you do he will spring up in some tiresome meeting in less than a week and unsay every single word that you said. He said—"

At this point a poor martyr, who had the misery to sit directly in front of these two whisperers, turned and gave them such a look as only a man can under like circumstances, and awed them into five minutes of quiet. It lasted until Dr. Eggleston was announced. Then Marion's tongue broke loose again:

"He is the 'Hoosier Schoolmaster.' Don't you know we read his book aloud at the seminary? Looks as though he might have written it, doesn't he? Let's listen to what he says. He

always says a word or two that a body can report; very few of them do."

This is a fair specimen of the way in which Miss Wilbur buzzed through that meeting—that *wonderful* meeting, that Flossy Shipley will remember all her life. She made no answer to Marion's comments after a little, and the pink flush glowed deeper on her face. She was wonderfully interested — indeed she was more than interested. There was a strange feeling of pain at her heart, a sort of sick, longing feeling that she had never felt before, to understand what all these people meant, to feel as they seemed to feel.

The Christian world is more to blame for the unspoken infidelity that thrives in its circles than is generally supposed. Flossy Shipley had been in many religious meetings, but she had really never in her life before been among a large gathering of cultured people, who were eager and excited and happy, and the cause for that eagerness and that happiness been found in the religion of Jesus Christ. I do not say that there had never been such meetings before, nor that there have not been many of them. I simply

say that it was a new revelation to Flossy, and she had been to the church prayer-meeting at home several times. Whether that church may have been peculiar or not I do not say, but Flossy had certainly failed to get the idea that prayer-meetings were blessed places; that the people who went there from week to week found their joy and their rest and their comfort there. She began to have an unutterable sense of want and longing creeping over her; she stole shy glances at Marion to see if she felt this, but Marion was absorbed just then in catching the speaker's last sentence and writing it down. Her face expressed nothing but business earnestness. Speech-making concluded, there came the "covenant service."

"I wonder what that is supposed to be?" whispered Marion. "It sounds like something dreadfully solemn. I hope they are not going to have any scenes. Revivals are not fashionable except in the winter."

"Marion, *don't!*" Flossy said, in an earnest undertone. The gay, and what for the first time struck her as the sacrilegious words, chilled her. And for almost the first time in her life she

tered an unhesitating remonstrance. Something in the tone surprised Marion, and she looked curiously down at her little companion, but said not another word.

The covenant service was the simplest of all services; in fact, only the singing of a familiar hymn and the offering of a prayer. But the hymn was read first, in such solemn, tender, pleading tones as it seemed to Flossy she had never heard before; and the singing rolled around that great tent like the voices of the ten thousand who sing before the throne — at least to Flossy's heart it seemed like that. The prayer that followed was the simplest of all prayers as to words, and the briefest public prayer she ever remembered to have heard, and it made her feel as nothing in life had ever done before. She did not understand the cause for her emotion; she was not acquainted with the Spirit of God; she did not know that he was speaking to her softened heart, and calling her gently to himself, so she felt ashamed of the emotion that she could not help. She wiped the tears away secretly, and was glad that the night was dark and the need for haste great, for

the steamer's warning whistle could already be heard. Marion talked on as they went down the hill, not alone now but accompanied by hundreds, talked precisely as she had before the singing of those words and the prayer. "How could she?" Flossy wondered. "How could anything look the same to her?" The Spirit had found no softened heart in which to leave a message, and so had passed by. This, if Flossy had known it, was the reason that Marion was gay and indifferent. If either of them had fully realized the reason for the different effect of the meeting upon them, how startled they would have been! It is not strange after all that a service is not the same to one soul that it is to another, when we remember that God speaks to one and passes another.

The night was still heavy with clouds, not a star to lighten the gloom; a fine mist was falling. It was Marion who shivered this time, and said:

"It is a horrible night, that is a fact; but I am not sorry we went. That meeting will write up splendidly, though it was too long; I will say that in print about it. You must find some

fault, you know, when you are writing for the public; it is the fashion."

"Was it long?" said Flossy, in an absent tone. She had not thought of it in that way. Then she went to the side of the boat again and sat down in a tumult. What was the matter with her? Where had her complacent, pretty little content gone? Would she *always* feel so sad and anxious and unhappy, have such a longing as she did now? If she had been wiser she could have told herself that the trouble of heart was caused by an unhealthy excitement upon this question, and that this was the great fault with religious meetings; but she was not wise, she did not think of such a reason. If it had been suggested to her it is doubtful if, in her ignorance, she would not have said: "Why, she had been more excited at an evening party a hundred times than she had thought of being then!" She actually did not know that eagerness and zeal are proper enough at parties, but utterly out of place in religion. Just in front of her sat a young man who hummed in undertone the closing words of the covenant song. It brought the tears again to Flossy's eyes. He turned suddenly toward her.

"It was a pleasant service," he said. "Don't you think so?"

It was rather startling to be addressed by a strange young gentleman, or would have been if his voice had not been so quiet and dignified, as if it were the most natural thing in the world to compare notes with one who had just come out from the great meeting.

"I don't know whether it was or not," she said, hurriedly. She could not seem to decide whether she enjoyed it or hated it.

"It was blessed to me," the young man said, in quiet voice; and added in undertone, as if speaking to himself only: "God was there."

"Do you feel that?" said Flossy, suddenly. "Then I wonder that you were not afraid."

He turned toward her a pleasant face and said, earnestly:

"You would not be afraid of your father, would you? Well, God is my Father, my reconciled Father;" And then, after a moment, he added: "If I were not at peace with him, and had reason to think that he was angry with me, then it would be different. Then I suppose I should be afraid; at least I think it would be reasonable to be."

Flossy spoke out of the fullness of a troubled heart:

"I don't understand it at all. I never wanted to, either, until just to-night; but now I want to feel as those people did when they sang that hymn."

Marion came quickly up from the other side.

"Flossy," she said, with sudden sharpness, "come over here and watch the track of the boat through the water." And as Flossy mechanically obeyed, she added: "What a foolish, heedless little mouse you are! I wonder that your mother let you go from her sight. Don't you know that you mustn't get up conversations with strange young men in that fashion?"

Flossy had not thought of it at all: but now she said a little drearily, as if the subject did not interest her:

"But I have often held conversations with strange young men at the dancing-hall, you know, and danced with them, too, when *everything* I knew about them was their names, and generally I forgot that."

Marion gave a light laugh.

"That is different," she said, letting her lip

curl in the darkness over the folly of her own words. "What is proper at a dance is very improper coming home from prayer-meeting, don't you see?"

"What do you think!" she said the minute they were in their rooms. "There was I, leaning meditatively over the boat, thinking solemnly on the truths I had heard, and that absurd little water-proof morsel was having a flirtation with a nice young man. Here is one of the fruits of the system! What on earth was he saying to you, Flossy?"

"Don't!" said Flossy, for the second time that evening. "He wasn't saying any harm."

The whole thing jarred on her with an inexpressible and to her bewildering pain. She had always been ready for fun before.

"That girl is homesick, or something," Marion said, as she and Eurie went to their rooms, leaving Flossy with Ruth, who prefered her as a room-mate to either of the others because she *could* keep from talking.

"I haven't the least idea what is the matter, but she has been as unlike herself as possible. I hope she isn't going to get sick and spoil our

fun. How silly we were to bring her, anyway. The baby hasn't life enough to see the frolic of the thing, and the intellectual is miles beyond her. I suspect she was dreadfully bored this evening. But, Eurie, there is going to be some splendid speaking done here. I shouldn't wonder if we attended a good many of the meetings."

CHAPTER V.

UNREST.

FLOSSY went to the window and stood looking out into the starless night. The pain in her heart deepened with every moment.

"If there was only some one to ask, some one to say a word to me," she sighed to herself. "It seems as though I could never go to sleep with this feeling clinging to me. I wonder what can be the matter? Perhaps I am sick and am going to die. It feels almost like that, and I am not fit to die — I am afraid. I wonder if Ruth Erskine is afraid to die? I have almost a mind to ask her. I wonder if she ever prays? People who are not afraid of death are always those who pray. Perhaps she will to-night. I feel as though I wanted to pray; I think if I only knew

how it would be just the thing to do. If she kneels down I mean to go and kneel beside her."

These were some of the thoughts that whirled through her brain as she stood with her nose pressed to the glass. But Ruth did not pray. She went around with the composed air of one who was at peace with all the world; and when her elaborate preparations for rest were concluded she laid her head on her pillow without one thought of prayer.

"Why in the name of sense don't you come to bed?" she presently asked, surveying with curious glance the quiet little creature whose face was hidden from her, and who was acting entirely out of accordance with anything she had ever seen in her before. "What can you possibly find to keep you gazing out of that window? It can't be called star-gazing, for to my certain knowledge there isn't a single star visible; in fact, I should say nothing could be visible but the darkness."

For a minute Flossy made no answer. She did not move nor turn her head; but presently she said, in a low and gentle voice:

"Ruth, should you be afraid to die?"

"To die!" said Ruth; and I have no means of telling you what an astonished face and voice she had. "Flossy Shipley, what do you mean?"

"Why, I mean *that*," said Flossy, in the same quiet tone. "Of course we have got to die, and everybody knows it; and what I say is, should you be afraid if it were to-night, you know?"

"Humph!" said Ruth, turning her pillow and waiting to beat it into shape before she spoke further. "I haven't the least idea of dying to-night."

"But how can you be *sure* of that? You might *have* to die to-night, you know people do sometimes."

"I know one thing, am perfectly certain of it, and that is, that you will take cold standing there and making yourself dismal. You are shivering like a leaf, I can see you from here. If that is all the good to be gotten from the 'religious impressions' that they harp about being so great here, the less religion they have the better, and there is quite little enough you may be sure." Saying which, Ruth turned her pillow again and her head, so that she could not see the small creature at the window. She was unac

countably rasped, not to say startled, by her question, and she did not like to be startled; she liked to have her current of life run smoothly.

As for Flossy, she gave a great sigh of disappointment and unrest, and turned slowly from the window. She had vaguely hoped for help of some sort from Ruth, and as she lay down on her prayerless pillow she said to herself, "If she had only knelt down I should certainly have done so, too; and perhaps I might have been helped out of this dreadful feeling." Yet so ignorant was she of the way that it never once occurred to her to kneel alone and pray.

No more words were spoken by those two girls that night, but each lay awake for a long time and tossed about restlessly. Ruth had been most effectually disturbed, and try as best she could it was impossible to banish the memory of those quiet words: "You might *have* to die to-night; people do, you know." To actually *have* to do something that she had not planned to do, and was not quite ready for, would be a new experience to this girl. Yet when would she be ready to plan for dying? At last she grew thoroughly vexed, and vented her disgust on the

"religionists" who got up camp-meeting excitements for the purpose of turning weak brains like Flossy Shipley's. After that she went to sleep.

"Flossy Shipley, for pity's sake *don't* rig yourself up in that awful cashmere! It rains yet, and you will just be going around with five wrinkles on your forehead all day, besides spoiling your dress."

It was morning, and the door of communication between the two sleeping-rooms being thrown open the four girls were in full tide of talk and preparation for Fairpoint. Flossy, though kept her strangely quiet face and manner; the night had not brought her peace; she had tossed restlessly for hours, and when at last she slept it was only to be haunted with troubled dreams. With the first breath of morning she opened her eyes and felt that the weight of yesterday was still pressing on her heart.

"What *shall* I wear?" she asked, in an absent, bewildered way of Eurie, who had objected to the cashmere.

"I'm sure I don't know. Didn't you bring anything suited to the rain? Let me go fishing

in that ponderous trunk and see if I can't find something."

The "fishing" produced nothing more suitable than a heavy black silk, elaborately trimmed, and looking, as Eurie phrased it, "elegantly out of place."

Through much confusion and frolicking the four were at last entering the grounds at Chautauqua. By reason of their superior knowledge Marion and Flossy led the way, while the others followed eagerly, looking and exclaiming.

"I'll tell you what it is, girls," Eurie said, eagerly. "Let's come over here and board. We'll have a tent or a cottage. A tent will be jollier, and it will be twice as much fun as to stay at the hotel."

There being no dissenting voice to this proposal, they started in much glee to look up a home; only Flossy demurred timidly.

"Can't we go to the meeting, girls, and look for the tent afterward? The meeting has commenced; I hear them singing."

"It's nothing in the world but a Bible service," Eurie said. "That man at the gate handed me a programme. Who wants to go to a Bible ser-

vice? We have Bibles enough at home. We want to be on hand at eleven o'clock, because Edward Eggleston is to speak on 'The Paradise of Childhood.' My childhood was anything but paradise, but I am anxious to know what he will make of it."

Flossy succumbed, of course, as every one expected she would; and the party went in search of tents and accommodations. It was no easy matter to suit them, as the patient and courteous President found.

"I don't like the location of any one of them," Ruth Erskine said. Of course she was the hardest to suit. "Why can't we have one of those in that row on the hill?"

"Those are the guest tents, ma'am."

"The guest tents?" Eurie exclaimed, in surprise. "I wonder if they entertain guests here! Who are they?"

"Why, those who have been invited to take part in the exercises, of course. You did not suppose that they paid their own expenses and did the work besides, did you?"

This explanation was given by Marion, who, by virtue of her experience as reporter was bet-

ter versed in the ways of these great gatherings than the others.

"What an idea!" Eurie said. "Fancy being a guest and speaking at this great meeting! Being a person of distinction, you know; so that people would be pointing you out, and telling their neighbors who you were.

"There goes Miss Mitchell. She is the leading speaker on Sunday-school books. How does that sound? Only, on the whole, I should choose some other department than Sunday-school books; they are all so horridly good — the people in them, I mean — that one can't get through with more than two in a season. I tried to read one last week for Sunday, but I abandoned it in despair."

This was an aside, while Ruth was questioning the President. She was looking dismayed.

"Can't we have one of the tents on that side, near the stand?"

"Those were taken months ago. This is a large gathering, you know."

"I should think it was! Then, it seems, we must go back to the hotel. I thought you would be glad to let us have accommodations at any price"

The gentlemanly President here carefully repressed an amused smile. Here were people who had evidently misunderstood Chautauqua.

"Oh, yes," he said, "we can give you accommodations, only not the very best, I am sorry to say. Our best tents were secured many months ago. Still, we will do the best we can for you, and I think we can make you entirely comfortable."

"People have different ideas as to the meaning of that word," Miss Erskine said, loftily.

Then she moved to another tent, over which she exclaimed in dismay:

"Why, the bed isn't made up! Pray, are we to sleep on the slats?"

"Oh, no. But you have to hire all those things, you know. Have you seen our bulletin? There are parties on the ground prepared to fit up everything that you need, and to do it very reasonably. Of course we can not know what degree of expense those requiring tents care to incur, so we leave that matter for them to decide for themselves. You can have as many or as few comforts as you choose, and pay accordingly."

"And are all four of us expected to occupy this one room?" There was an expression of decided disgust on Miss Erskine's face.

"Why, you see," explained the amused President, "this tent is designed for four; two good-sized bedsteads set up in it; and the necessity seems to be upon us to crowd as much as we can conveniently. There will be no danger of impure air, you know, for you have all out-doors to breathe."

"And you really don't have toilet stands or toilet accommodations! What a way to live!"

Another voice chimed in now, which was the very embodiment of refined horror.

"And you don't have pianos nor sofas, and the room isn't lighted with gas! I'm sure I don't see how we can live! It is not what we have been accustomed to."

This was Marion, with the most dancing eyes in the world, and the President completed the scene by laughing outright. Suddenly Ruth discovered that she was acting the part of a simpleton, and with flushed face she turned from them, and walked to a vacant seat, in the opposite direction from where they were standing.

"We will take this one," she said, haughtily, without vouchsafing it a look. "I presume it is as good as any of them, and, since we are fairly into this absurd scrape we must make the best of it."

"Or the worst of it," Marion said, still laughing. "You are bent on doing that, I think. Ruthie."

By a violent effort and rare good sense Ruth controlled herself sufficiently to laugh, and the embarrassment vanished. There were splendid points about this girl's character, not the least among them being the ability to laugh at a joke that had been turned toward herself. At least the effect was splendid. The reasons, therefore, might have been better. It was because her sharp brain saw the better effect that her ability to do this thing immediately produced on the people around her. But I shall have to confess that a poise of character strong enough to gracefully avert unpleasant effects arising from causes of her own making ought to have been strong enough to have suppressed the causes.

The question of an abiding-place being thus summarily disposed of, the party set themselves

to work with great energy to get settled, Marion and Eurie taking the lead. Both were used to both planning and working, and Marion at least had so much of it to do as to have lost all desire to lead unnecessarily, and therefore everything grew harmonious.

There was a good deal of genuine disgust in Ruth's part of it, though, her eyes having been opened, she bravely tried to hide the feeling from the rest. But you will remember that she had lived and breathed in an atmosphere of elegant refinement all her life, accepting the luxuries of life as common necessities until they had really become such to her, and the idea of doing without many things that people during camp life necessarily find themselves *obliged* to do without was not only strange to her but exceedingly disagreeable. The two leaders being less used to the extremes of luxury, and more indif ferent to them by nature, could not understand and had little sympathy with her feeling.

"We shall have to go back after all to the hotel," Eurie said, as she dived both hands into the straw tick and tried to level the bed. "We have too fine a lady among us; she cannot sleep

on a bedstead that doesn't rest its aristocratic legs on a velvet carpet. She doesn't see the fun at all. I thought Flossy would be the silly one, but Flossy is in a fit of the dumps. I never saw her so indifferent to her dress before. See her now, bringing that three-legged stand, without regard to rain! There is one comfort in this perpetual rain, we shall have less dust. After all, though, I don't know as that is any improvement, so long as it goes and makes itself up into mud. Look at the mud on my dress! That tent we were looking at first would have been ever so much the best, but after Ruth's silliness I really hadn't the face to suggest a change — I thought we had given trouble enough. She makes a mistake; she thinks this is a great hotel, where people are bound to get all the money they can and give as little return, instead of its being a place where people are striving to be as accommodating as they can, and give everybody as good a time as possible."

In the midst of all this talk and work they left and ran up the hill to the Tabernacle, where the crowds were gathering to hear Dr. Eggleston. It was a novel sight to these four girls; the great

army of eager, strong, expectant faces; the ladies, almost without an exception, dressed to match the rain and the woods, looking neither tired nor annoyed about anything — looking only in earnest. To Ruth, especially, it came like a revelation. She looked around her with surprised eyes. There were intellectual faces on every hand. There was the hum of conversation all about her, for the meeting was not yet opened, and the tone of their words was different from any with which her life had been familiar; they seemed lifted up, enthused; they seemed to have found something worthy of enthusiasm. As a rule Ruth had not enjoyed enthusiastic people; they had seemed silly to her; and you will admit that there is a silly side to the consuming of a great deal of that trait on the dress for an evening party, or the arrangement of programmes for a fancy concert. Just now she had a glimmering fancy that there might be something worthy of arresting and holding one's eager attention.

"They look alive," she said, turning from right to left among the rows and rows of faces. "They look as though they had a good

deal to do, and they thought it was worth doing."

Then, curiously enough, there came suddenly to her mind that question which she had banished the night before, and she wondered if these people had all really answered it to their satisfaction.

Flossy took a seat immediately in front of the speaker. She was hungry for something, and she did not know what to call it — something that would set her fevered heart at rest. As for Marion and Eurie, they hoped with all their hearts that the "Hoosier Schoolmaster" would give them a rich intellectual treat, at least Marion was after the intellectual. Eurie would be contented if she got the fun, and a man like Dr. Eggleston has enough of both those elements to make sure of satisfying their hopes. But would he bring something to help Flossy?

CHAPTER VI.

FEASTS.

"HE doesn't look in the least as I thought he did." It was Eurie who whispered this, and she nudged Marion's arm by way of emphasis as she did it.

Marion laughed.

"How did you think he looked?"

"Oh, I don't know — rough, rather."

Whereupon Marion laughed again.

"That is the way some people discriminate," she whispered back. "You think because he wrote about rough people he must be rough; and when one writes about people of culture and elegance you think straightway that he is the personification of those ideas. You forget,

you see, that the world is full to the brim with hypocrisy; and it is easier to be perfect on paper than it is anywhere else in this world."

"Or to be a sinner either, according to that view of it."

"It is easy enough to be a sinner anywhere. Hush, I want to listen."

For which want the people all about her must have been very thankful. Our young ladies gave Dr. Eggleston their attention at the moment when he was drawling out in his most nasal and ludicrous tones the hymn that used to be a favorite in Sunday-schools ninety years ago:

> "Broad is the road that leads to death,
> And thousands walk together there,
> But wisdom shows a narrow path,
> With here and there a traveler."

The manner in which part of these lines were repeated was irresistibly funny. To Eurie it was explosively so; she laughed until the seat shook with mirth. To be sure, she knew nothing about modern Sunday-schools; for aught that she was certain of, they might have sung that very hymn in the First Church Sunday-

school the Sabbath before; and it made not the least atom of difference whether they did or not; the way in which Dr. Eggleston was putting it was funny, and Eurie never spoiled fun for the sake of sentiment. Presently she looked up at Marion for sympathy. That young lady's eyes were in a blaze of indignation. What in the world was the matter with her? Surely she, with her hearty and unquestioning belief in *nothing*, could not have been disturbed by any jar! Let me tell you a word about Marion. Away back in her childhood there was a memory of a little dingy, old-fashioned kitchen, one of the oldest and dreariest of its kind, where the chimney smoked and the winter wind crawled in through endless cracks and crannies; where it was not always possible to get enough to eat during the hardest times; but there was a large, old-fashioned arm-chair, covered with frayed and faded calico, and in this chair sat often of a winter evening a clean-faced old man, with thin and many-patched clothes, with a worn and sickly face, with a few gray hairs straggling sadly about on his smooth crown; and that old man used often and often to drone

out in a cracked voice and in a tune pitched too low by half an octave the very words which had just been repeated in Marion's hearing. What of all that? Why, that little gloomy kitchen was Marion's memory of home; that old, tired man was her father, and he used to sing those words while his hand wandered tenderly through the curls of her brown head, and patted softly the white forehead over which they fell; and all of love that there was in life, all that the word "tenderness" meant, all that was dear, or sweet, or to be reverenced, was embodied in that one memory to Marion. Now you understand the flashing eyes. She did not believe it at all; she believed, or thought she did, that the "broad" and "narrow" roads were all nonsense; that go where you would, or do what you would, all the roads led to *death*; and that was the end. But the father who had quavered through those lines so many times had staked his hopes forever on that belief, and the assurance of it had clothed his face in a grand smile as he lay dying—a smile that she liked to think of, that she did not like to hear ridiculed, and to her excited imagination Dr. Eggleston seemed to be ridiculing the faith on which the hymn was built.

"They are more thorough hypocrites than I supposed," she said, in scorn, and hardly in undertone, in answer to Eurie's inquiring look. "I don't believe the stuff myself, but I always supposed the ministers did. I gave some of them at least credit for sincerity, but it seems it is nothing but a fable to be laughed to scorn."

"Why, Marion!" Eurie said, and her look expressed surprise and dismay. "He is not making fun of religion, you know; he is simply referring to the inappropriateness of such hymns for children."

"What is so glaringly inappropriate about it if they really believe the Bible? I'm sure it says there that there are two roads, one broad and the other narrow; and that many people are on one and but few on the other. Why shouldn't it be put into a hymn if it is desirable to impress it?"

"I'm sure I don't know," Eurie said, unaccustomed to being put through a course of logic. "Only, you know, I suppose he simply means that it is beyond their comprehensions."

"They must have remarkably limited comprehensions then if they are incapable of under-

standing so simple a figure of speech, as that there are two ways to go, and one is harder and safer than the other. I understood it when it was sung to me — and I was a very little child — and believed it, too, until I saw the lives of people contradict it; but if I believed it still I would not make public sport of it."

At this point Ruth leaned forward from the seat behind and whispered:

"Girls, do keep still; you are drawing the attention of all the people around you and disturbing everybody."

After that they kept still; but the good doctor had effectually sealed one heart to whatever that was tender and earnest he might have to say. She sat erect, with scornful eyes and glowing cheeks, and when the first flush of excitement passed off was simply harder and gayer than before. Who imagined such a result as that? Nobody, of course. But how perfectly foolish and illogical! Couldn't she see that Dr. Eggleston only meant to refer to the fact that literature, both of prose and poetry, had been improved by being brought to the level of childish minds, and to reprove that way of teaching

religious truth, that leaves a somber, dismal impression on youthful hearts? Apparently she could not, since she did not. As for being absurd and illogical, I *did* not say that she wasn't. I am simply giving you facts as they occurred. I think myself that she was dishonoring the memory of her father ten thousand times more than any chance and unmeant word of the speakers could possibly have done. The only trouble was, that she was such an idiot she did not see it; and she prided herself on her powers of reasoning, too! But the world is full of idiots. She sat like a stone during the rest of the brilliant lecture. Many things she heard because she could not help hearing; many she admired, because it was in her to admire a brilliant and charming thing, and she could not help that, either; but she could shut her *heart* to all tenderness of feeling and all softening influences, and that she did with much satisfaction, deliberately steeling herself against the words of a man because he had quoted a chance line that her father used to sing, while she lived every day of her life in defiance of the principles by which her father shaped *his* life and his death! Verily, the ways of girls are beyond understanding.

Eurie enjoyed it all. When Dr. Eggleston told of the men that, as soon as their children grew a little too restless, had business down town, she clapped her hands softly and whispered:

"That is for all the world like father. Neddie and Puss were never in a whining fit in their lives that father didn't at once think of a patient he had neglected to visit that day, and rush off."

She laughed over the thought that women were shut in with little steam engines, and said:

"That's a capital name for them; we have three at home that are always just at the very point of explosion. I mean to write to mother and tell her I have found a new name for them."

When he suggested the blunt-end scissors, and the colored crayons with which they could make wonderful yellow dogs, with green tails and blue eyes, her delight became so great that she looked around to Ruth to help her enjoy it, and said:

"You see if I don't invest in a ton of colored crayons the very first thing I do when I get home; it is just capital! *So* strange I never thought of it before."

"You did not think of it now," Ruth said, in her quiet cooling way. "Give the speaker credit for his own ideas, please. Half the world have to do the thinking for the other half always."

"That is the reason so much is left undone, then," retorted Eurie, with unfailing good humor, and turned back to the speaker in time to hear his description of the superintendent that was so long in finding the place to sing that the boys before him went around the world while he was giving the number.

"Slow people," said she, going down the hill afterward. "I never could endure them, and I shall have less patience with them in future than ever. Wasn't he splendid? Ruth, you liked the part about Dickens, of course."

"A valuable help the lecture will be to your after-life if all you have got is an added feeling of impatience toward slow people. Unfortunately for you they are in the world, and will be very likely to stay in it, and a very good sort of people they are, too."

It was Marion who said this, and her tone was dry and unsympathetic.

Eurie turned to her curiously.

"You didn't like him," she said, "did you? I am so surprised; I thought you would think him splendid. On your favorite hobby, too. I said to myself this will be just in Marion's line. She has so much to say about teaching children by rote in a dull and uninteresting way. You couldn't forgive him for reciting that horrid old hymn in such a funny way. Flossy, do you suppose you can ever hear that hymn read again without laughing? What was the matter, Marion? Who imagined you had any sentimental drawings toward Watts' hymns?"

"I didn't even know it was Watts' hymn," Marion said, indifferently. "But I hate to hear any one go back on his own belief. If he honestly believes in the sentiments of that verse, and they certainly are Bible sentiments, he shouldn't make fun of it. But I'm sure it is of no consequence to me. He may make fun of the whole Bible if he chooses, verse by verse, and preach a melting sermon from it the very next Sabbath; it will be all the same to me. Let us go in search of some dinner, and not talk any more about him."

"But that isn't fair. You are unjust, isn't she, Ruth? I say he didn't make fun of religion, as Marion persists in saying that he did."

"Of course not," Ruth said. "A minister would hardly be guilty of doing that. He was simply comparing the advanced methods of the present with the stupidity of the past."

And obstinate Marion said then he ought to get a new Bible, for the very same notions were in it that were when she was a child and learned verses. And that was all that this discussion amounted to. Nobody had appealed to Flossy. She had stood looking with an indifferent air around her, until Marion turned suddenly and said:

"What did the lecture say to you, Flossy? Eurie seems very anxious to get out of it something for our 'special needs,' as they say in church. What was yours?"

Flossy hesitated like a timid child, flushed and then paled, and finally said, simply:

"I have been thinking ever since he spoke it of that one sentence, 'Rock-firm, God-trust, has died out of the world.' I was wondering if it were true, and I was wishing that it wasn't."

All the girls looked at each other in astonished silence; such a strange thing for Flossy to say.

"What of it?" said Marion, presently. "What if it has? or, rather, what if it were never in the world?"

"It wasn't that side of it that I thought about. It was what if it *were*."

"And what then?"

"Why, then, I should like to see the person who had it, just to see how he would seem."

Marion laughed somewhat scornfully.

"Curiosity is at the bottom of your wise thought, is it? Well, my little mousie, I am amazingly afraid you are destined never to discover how it will seem. So I wouldn't puzzle my brains about it. It might be too much for them. Shall we go to dinner?"

You should have seen our four young ladies taking their first meal at Chautauqua! It was an experience not to be forgotten. They went to the "hotel." This was a long board building, improvised for the occasion, and filled with as many comforts as the *necessities* of the occasion could furnish. To Miss Erskine the word "hotel" had only one sort of association. She

had been a traveler in her own country only, and it had been her fortune to be intimate only with the hotels in large cities, and only with those where people go whose purses are full to overflowing. So she had come to associate with the name all that was elegant or refined or luxurious.

When the President of the grounds inquired whether they would have tickets for the hotel or one of the boarding-houses, Miss Erskine had answered without hesitation:

"For the hotel, of course. I never have anything to do with boarding-houses. They are almost certain to be second rate."

Said President kept his own counsel, thinking, I fancy, that here was a girl who needed some lessons in the practical things of this life, and Chautauqua hotels were good places in which to take lessons.

Imagine now, if you can, the look of this lady's face, as they made their way with much difficulty down the long room, and looked about them on either side for seats.

"A hotel, indeed!" she said, in utter contempt and disgust, as one of the attendants sig-

naled them and politely drew back the long board seat that did duty in the place of chairs, and answered for five, or, if you were good natured and crowded, for six people. He was just as polite in his attentions as if the unplaned seat had been a carved chair of graceful shape and pattern. One would suppose that Ruth might have taken a hint from his example. But the truth is, she belonged to that class of people who are so accustomed to polite attentions that it is only their absence which calls forth remark.

"The idea of naming this horrid, dirty old lumber-room a hotel!" and she carefully and disdainfully spread her waterproof cloak on the seat before she took it.

Eurie's merry laugh rang out until others looked and smiled in sympathy with her fun, whatever it was.

"What in the world did you expect, Ruthie? I declare, you are too comical! I verily believe you expected Brussels carpets, and mirrors in which you could admire yourself all the while you were eating."

"I expected a *hotel*," Ruth said, in no wise diminishing her lofty tone. "That is what is

advertised, and people naturally do not look for so much deception in a religious gathering. This is nothing in the world but a shanty."

Chautauqua was doing one thing for this young lady which surprised and annoyed her. It was helping her to get acquainted with herself. Up to this time she had looked upon herself as a person of smooth and even temperament, not by any means easily ruffled or turned from her quiet poise. She had prided herself on her composed, gracefully dignified way of receiving things. She never hurried, she never was breathless and flushed, and apologetic over something that she ought or ought not to have done, which was a chronic state with Eurie. She never was in a thorough and undisguised rage, as Marion was quite likely to be. She was, in her own estimation, a model of propriety. All this until she came to Chautauqua. Now, great was her surprise to discover in herself a disposition to be utterly disgusted with things that to Marion were of so little consequences as to be unnoticed, and that to Eurie were positive sources of fun.

Doubtless you understand her better than she

did herself. The truth is, it is a comparatively easy matter to be gracious and courteous and unruffled when everything about you is moving exactly according to your mind, and when you can think of nothing earthly to be annoyed about. There are some natures that are deceiving their own hearts in just such an atmosphere as this. They are not the lowest type of nature by any means. The small, petty trials that come to every life are beneath them. If it rains when they want to walk they can go in a handsome carriage, and keep their tempers. If their elegant new robes prove to be badly made they can have them remodeled and made more elegant with a superior composure. In just so far are they above the class who can endure nothing in the shape of annoyances or disappointment, however small. The fact is, however, that there are petty annoyance, *not* coming in their line of life, that would be altogether too much for them. But of this they remain in graceful ignorance until some Chautauqua brings the sleeping shadows to the surface.

CHAPTER VII.

TABLE TALK.

"WHAT is your private explanation of the word 'hotel'?" Marion asked. She was in an argumentative mood, and it made almost no difference to her which side of the question she argued. "Webster says it is a place to entertain strangers, but you seem to attach some special importance to the term."

"Is that all that Webster says?"

The questioner was not Ruth, but a man who sat just opposite to them at the table, and while he waited for his order to be filled watched with amused eyes the four girls who were evidently in a new element. He was not a young man, and his gray hairs would have arrested the pertness

of the reply on Marion's tongue at any other time than this, but you remember that she was not in a good mood. She answered promptly;

"Yes, sir, he says ever so many things. In fact, he is the most voluminous author I ever read."

The gentleman laughed. The pertness seemed to amuse him.

"Didn't I limit my question?" he said, pleasantly. "He is voluminous, and what a sensible book he has written. I wish all authors had given us so much information. But I meant, is that all he says about hotels? Doesn't he justify your friend just a little bit in her expectations?"

"I'm sure I don't know," Marion said, amused in turn at the good-natured interest which the elderly gentleman took in the question. "He has said so much that I haven't had time to digest it all. If you have, won't you please enlighten me as to his wisdom on this subject?"

"'Especially one of some style or pretensions,'" quoted the old gentleman, "so Webster adds. You see I am interested in the subject," and he laughed pleasantly. "I have been looking it up.

which must be my apology for addressing you young ladies, if so old a man as I must apologize for being interested in girls. The fact is, I had occasion to talk with a young man yesterday who took the people to task most roundly for that very name, on the ground that they had no right to it — that it was a misnomer. I have been struck with the thought that nothing is trivial, not even the name that happens to be chosen for a house where one *waits* for his dinner," with a strong emphasis on the word "wait," which Eurie understood and laughed over.

"Except the remarks that people make about such things," Marion said, answering the first part of the sentence and bestowing a wicked glance on Ruth. "They are trivial enough. Did you agree with the young gentleman?"

"No. I thought it all over and consulted Webster, as I said, and came to the conclusion that in view of this being a more pretentious house than either of the others they had a right to the word. Webster doesn't say what degree of pretension is necessary, you know."

The lifting of Ruth's eyebrows at this point was so expressive that all the party laughed

But the old gentleman grew grave again in a moment, as he said:

"But the thought that impressed me most was what a very perfect system of faith the religion of Jesus Christ is; how completely it commends itself to the human heart, since the very slightest departure from what is regarded as strictly true and right, when it is done by a Christian (society or individual), is noticed and commented upon by lookers-on; they seem to know of a certainty that it is not according to the Spirit of Christ."

This last sentence struck Marion dumb. How fond she was of caviling at Christian lives! Was she really thus giving all the time an unconscious tribute to the truth and purity of the Christian faith?

It was a merry dinner, after all, eaten with steel forks and without napkins, and with plated spoons, if you were so fortunate as to secure one. The rush of people was very great, and, with their inconvenient accommodations, the process of serving was slow.

Marion, her eyes being opened, went to studying the people about her. She found that court-

eous good-humor was the rule, and selfishness and ungraciousness the exception. Inconveniences were put up with and merrily laughed over by people who, from their dress and manners, could be accustomed to only the best.

Marion took mental notes.

"They do not act in the least like the mass of people who stop at railroad eating-houses for their dinner; they are patient and courteous under difficulties; they did not come here for the purpose of being entertained; if they did the accommodations wouldn't satisfy."

There was another little thing that interested Marion. As the tables kept filling, and those who had been served made room for those who had not, she found herself watching curiously what proportion of the guests observed that instant of silent thanks with covered eyes. It was so brief, so slight a thing, I venture that scarcely a person there noticed it, much less imagined that there was a pair of keen gray eyes over in the corner looking and calculating concerning them.

"What if they all had to wear badges," she said to herself, "badges that read 'I am a Chris-

tian,' I wonder how many of them it would influence to different words than they are speaking, or to different acts? I wonder if they *do* all wear them? I wonder if the distinction is really marked, so one looking on could detect the difference, though all of them are strangers? I mean to watch during these two weeks. 'The proper study of mankind is man.' Very well, Brother Pope, a convenient place for the study of man is Chautauqua. I'll take it up. Who knows but I may learn a new branch to teach the graded infants in Ward No. 4."

Ruth did not recover her equanimity. She was rasped on every side. Those two-tined steel forks were a positive sting to her. She shuddered as the steel touched her lips. She had no spoon at all, and she looked on in utter disgust while Eurie merrily stirred her tea with her fork. When the waiter came at last, with hearty apologies for keeping them waiting for their spoons, and the old gentleman said cordially, "All in good time. We shall not starve even if we get no spoons," she curled her lip disdainfully, and murmured that she had always been accustomed to the conveniences of life, and found it somewhat difficult to do without them.

When one is in the mood for grumbling there is no easier thing in the world than to find food for that spirit, and Ruth continued her pastime, waxing louder and more decided after the genial old man had left their neighborhood.

"What is the use in fault-finding?" Eurie said at last, half petulantly. She was growing very tired of this exhibition. "What did you expect? They are doing as well as they can, without any doubt. Just imagine what it must be to get conveniences together for this vast crowd. They did not expect anything like such a large attendance at first; I heard them say so and that makes it harder to wait upon them. But of course they are doing just as well as they can, and we fare as well as any of them."

"Don't you be so foolish as to believe that," Ruth said, with a curling lip. "If you could see behind the scenes you would soon discover something very different. That is why it is so provoking to me. Let people who cannot afford to pay any better take such as they can get. But what right had they to suppose that we had not the money to pay for what we wish? I'm sure *I'm* not a pauper! You will find that there

is a place where the select few can get what they want, and have it served in a respectable manner, and I say I don't like it; I have been accustomed to the decencies of life."

Just behind them the talk was going on unceasingly, and one voice, at this point, rising higher than the others, caught the attention of our girls. Eurie turned suddenly and tried to catch a glimpse of the speaker. Something in the voice sounded natural. A sudden movement on the part of the gentleman between them and she caught a glimpse of the face. She turned back eagerly.

"Girls, that is Mrs. Schuyler Germain!"

"Where?" Ruth asked, with sudden interest in her voice.

"Over at that table, in a water-proof cloak and black straw hat, and eating boiled potatoes with a steel fork. What about being behind the scenes now, Ruthie?"

To fully appreciate this you must understand that even among the Erskines to get as high as Mrs. Schulyer Germain was to get as high as the aristocracy of this world reached; not that she lived in any grander style than the Erskines,

or showed that she had more money, but every one knew that her bank accounts were very heavy, and, besides, she was the daughter of Gen. Wadsworth Hillyer, of Washington, and the great-granddaughter, by direct descent, of one of England's noblemen. She was traveled and cultivated, and all but titled through her youngest daughter.

Could American ambition reach higher? And there she sat, at a table made of pine boards, eating boiled potatoes with a two-tined steel fork! Could English nobility sink lower! Ruth looked over at her in quiet surprise for a moment, and then gave her head its haughty toss as she met Eurie's mischievous eyes, and said:

"It is not an aristocracy of position here, then. The leaders keep all their nice things and places for themselves. That is smaller than I supposed them to be."

At this particular moment there was an uprising from the table just behind them. Half a dozen gentlemen leaving their empty plates, and in full tide of talk, making their way down the hall. The girls looked and nudged each other as they recognized them. The younger of the

two foremost had a face that can not easily be mistaken, and Eurie, having seen it once, did not need Marion's low-toned, "That is Mr. Vincent." And Ruth herself, thrown off her guard, recognized and exclaimed over Dr. Hodge.

This climax was too much for Eurie. She threw down her fork to clap her hands in softly glee.

"Oh, Ruthie, Ruthie! How has your dismal castle of favoritism faded! Yonder is the Queen of American society eating pie at this very instant with the very fork which did duty on her potato, and here goes the King of the feast, wiping his lips on his own handkerchief instead of a damask napkin."

It was at this moment, when Ruth's follies and ill humors were rising to an almost unbearable height, that her higher nature asserted itself, and shone forth in a rich, full laugh. Then, in much glee and good feeling, they followed the crowd down the hill to the auditorium.

For the benefit of such poor benighted beings as have never seen Chautauqua, let me explain that the auditorium was the great temple where the congregation assembled for united service.

Such a grand temple as it was! The pillars thereof were great solemn trees, with their green leaves arching overhead in festoons of beauty. I don't know how many seats there were, nor how many could be accommodated at the auditorium. Eurie set out to walk up and down the long aisles one day and count the seats, but she found that which so arrested her attention before she was half-way down the central aisle that she forgot all about it, and there was never any time afterward for that work. I mean to tell you about that day when I get to it. The grand stand was down here in front of all these seats, spacious and convenient, the pillars thereof festooned with flags from many nations. The large piano occupied a central point; the speaker's desk at its feet, in the center of the stand; the reporters' tables and chairs just below.

"I ought to have one of those chairs," Marion said, as they passed the convenient little space railed off from the rest of the audience. "Just as if I were not a real reporter because I write in plain good English, instead of racing over the paper and making queer little tracks that only

one person in five thousand can read. If I were not the most modest and retiring of mortals I would go boldly up and claim a seat."

"What is to be next?" Ruth asked. "Are we supposed to be devoted to all these meetings? I thought we were only going to one now and then. We won't be alive in two weeks from now if we pin ourselves down here."

"In the way that we have been doing," chimed in Eurie. "Just think here we have been to every single meeting they have had yet, except the one last night and one this morning."

"We are going to skip every one that we possibly can," said Marion. "But the one that is to come just now is decidedly the one that we can't. The speaker is Dr. Calkins, of Buffalo. I heard him four years ago, and it is one of the few sermons that I remember to this day. I always said if I ever had another chance I should certainly hear him again. I like his subject this afternoon, too. It is appropriate to my condition."

"What is the subject?" Flossy asked, with a sudden glow of interest.

"It is what a Christian can learn from a

heathen. I'm the heathen, and I presume Dr. Calkins is the Christian. So he is to see what he can learn from me, I take it, and naturally I am anxious to know. Flossy isn't interested in that; I can see it from her face. She knows she isn't a heathen — she is a good proper little Christian. But it is your duty, my dear, to find what you can learn from me."

"What can he possibly make of such a subject as that?" Ruth asked, curiously. "I don't believe *I* want to hear him. Is he so very talented, Marion?"

"I don't know. Haven't the least idea whether he is what you call talented or not. He says things exactly as though he knew they were so, and for the time being he makes you feel as though you were a perfect simpleton for not knowing it, too."

"And you like to be made to feel like a 'perfect simpleton?' Is that the reason you resolved to hear him again?"

"I like to meet a man once in a while who knows how to do it, and for the matter of that I wouldn't mind being made to feel the truth of the things that he says, if one could only *stay*

made. It isn't the fault of the preaching that it all feels like a pretty story and nothing else; it is the fault of the wretched practicing that the sheep go home and do. It makes one feel like being an out-and-out goat, and done with it, instead of being such a perfect idiot of a sheep."

At this point the talk suddenly ceased, for the leaders began to assemble, and the service commenced. Ruth and Marion exchanged comic glances when they discovered the "heathen" of the afternoon to be Socrates. And Marion presently whispered that she was evidently to play the character of the old fellow's wife, and Eurie whispered to them both:

"Now I want to know if that horrid Zantippe was Socrates' wife! Upon my word I never knew it before. She wasn't to blame, after all, for being such a wretch."

"What do you mean?" Marion whispered back, with scornful eyes. "Socrates was the grandest old man that ever lived."

"Pooh! He wasn't. He didn't know any more than little mites of Sunday-school children do nowdays. I never could understand why his philosophy was so remarkable, only that he lived

in a heathen country and got ahead of all the rest, but if he were living now he would be a pigmy."

"I wish he were," Marion said, with her eyes still flashing. "I would like to see such a life as he lived."

This girl was a hero worshiper. Her cheeks could burn and her eyes glow over the grand stories of old heathen characters, and she could melt to tears over their trials and wrongs. And yet she passed by in haughty silence the sublime life that of all others is the only perfect one on record, and she had no tears to shed over the shameful and pitiful story of the cross. What a strange girl she was! I wonder if it be possible that there are any others like her?

CHAPTER VIII.

"AT EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE BRIGHT."

MEANTIME Flossy Shipley came to no place where her heart could rest. She went through that first day at Chautauqua in a sort of maze, hearing and yet not hearing, and longing in her very soul for something that she did not hear — that is, she did not hear it distinctly and fairly stated, so that she could grasp it and act upon it; and yet it was shadowed all around her, and hinted at in every word that was uttered, so that it was impossible to forget that there was a great something in which the most of these people were eagerly interested, and which was sealed to her.

She felt it dimly all the while that Dr. Eggleston was speaking; she felt it sensibly when they sang; she felt it in the chance words that caught her ear on every side as the meeting closed — bright, fresh words of greeting, of gladness, of satisfaction, but every one of them containing a ring that she could hear but not copy. What did it mean? And, above all, why did she care what it meant, when she had been happy all her life before without knowing or thinking anything about it?

As they went down the hill to dinner, she loitered somewhat behind the others, thinking while they talked. As the throng pressed down around them there came one whose face she instantly recognized; it belonged to the young man who had spoken to her on the boat the evening before. The face recalled the earnest words that he had spoken, and the tone of restful satisfaction in which they were spoken. His face wore the same look now — interested, alert, but *at rest.* She coveted rest. It was clear that he also recognized her, and something in her wistful eyes recalled the words *she* had spoken.

"Have you found the Father's presence yet?"

he asked, with a reverent tone to his voice when he said "the Father," and yet with such evident trust and love that the tears started to her eyes.

She answered quickly:

"No, I haven't. I cannot feel that he is *my* Father."

They went down the steps just then, and the crowd rushed in between them, so that neither knew what had become of the other; only that chance meeting; he might never see her again. Chautauqua was peculiarly a place where people met for a moment, then lost each other, perhaps for all the rest of the time.

"I may never see her again," Evan Roberts thought, "but I am glad that I said a word to her. I hope in my soul that she will let Him find her."

If Flossy could have heard this unspoken sentence she would have marveled. "Let Him find her!" Why, she was dimly conscious that she was seeking for Him, but no such thought had presented itself as that God was really seeking after her.

She went on, still falling behind, and trying to hide the rush of feeling that the simple question

had called forth. She was very quiet at the dinner table; she was oblivious to steel forks or the want of spoons; these things that had hitherto filled her life and looked of importance to her had strangely dwindled; she was miserably disappointed; she had looked forward to Chautauqua as a place where she could have such a "nice" time. That word "nice" was a favorite with her, and surely no one could be having a more wretched time than this; and it was not the rain, either, over which she had been miserable all day yesterday, nor her cashmere dress; she didn't care in the least now whether it cleared or not; and as to her dress, she had torn her silk twice, and it was sadly drabbled, but she did not even care for that; she wanted — what? Alas for the daughter of nominally Christian parents, living among all the privileges of a cultured Christian society, she *did not know what she wanted.*

Dr. Calkins had one eager listener. If he could have picked out her earnest, wistful eyes among that crowd of upturned faces he would have let old Socrates go, and given himself heart and soul to the leading of this groping soul into

the light. As it was he hovered around it, touching the subject here and there, thrilling her with the possibilities stretching out before her; but he was thinking of and talking all the while to those who had reached after and secured this "something" that to her was still a shadow. Now and then the speaker brought the quick tears to her eyes as he referred to those who had followed the teaching of his lips with sympathetic faces and answered the appeal to their hearts with tears; but her tears were different from those — they were the tears of a sick soul, longing for light and help.

The entire party ignored the evening meeting. Marion declared that her brain whirled now, so great had been the mental strain; Ruth was loftily indifferent to any plan that could be gotten up, and Eurie's wits were ripe for mischief; Flossy's opinion, of course, was not asked, nobody deeming it possible that she could have the slightest desire to go to meeting. In fact, Eurie put their desertion on the ground that Flossy had been exhausted by the mental effort of the day, and needed to be cheered and petted. She on her part was silent and wearily indifferent

she did not know what to do with her heavy heart, and felt that she might as soon walk down by the lake shore as do anything else; so down to the shore they went, and gave themselves up to the full enjoyment of the novel scene — an evening in the woods, great, glowing lights on every side, great companies of people passing to and fro, boats touching at the wharves and sending up group after group to the central attraction, the grand stand; singing, music by thousands of voices ringing down to them as they loitered under the trees on the rustic seats.

"I declare, it must be nice in heaven for a little while."

It was Eurie who made this somewhat startling discovery and announcement after a lull had fallen upon their mirth.

"Have you been there to see?" illogically asked Marion, as she threw a tiny stone into the water and watched the waves quiver and ripple.

Eurie laughed.

"Not quite, but this must be a little piece of it — this music, I mean. I am almost tempted to make an effort after the real thing. How ex-

quisitely those voices sound! I'm very certain I should enjoy the music, whether I should be able to get along with the rest of the programme or not. What on earth do you suppose they do there all the time, anyway?"

"Where?"

"Why, in heaven, of course; that is what I was talking about. I believe you are half asleep, Flossy Shipley; you mustn't go to sleep out here; it isn't quite heaven yet, and you will take cold. Honestly, girls, isn't it a sort of wonderment to you how the people up there can employ their time? In spite of me I cannot help feeling that it must be rather stupid; think of never being able to lie down and take a nap!"

"Or read a novel," added Marion. "Isn't that your favorite employment when you are awake, Eurie? I'm sure I don't know much about the occupations of the place; I'm not posted; there is nothing about it laid down in our geography; and, in fact, the people who seem to be expecting to spend their lives there are unaccountably mum about it. I don't at this moment remember hearing any one ever express a downright opinion, and I have always thought it rather queer

I asked Nellie Wheden about it one day when she was going on about her expected tour in Europe. She had bored me to death, making me produce all my geographic and historic lore for her benefit; and suddenly I thought of an expedient for giving myself a little peace and a chance to talk about something else. 'Come, Nellie,' I said, 'one good turn deserves another. I have told you everything I can think of that can possibly be of interest to you about Europe; now give me some information about the other place where you are going. You must have laid up a large stock of information in all these years.'"

"What on earth did she say?" Ruth asked, curiously, while Eurie was in great glee over the story.

"She was as puzzled as if I had spoken to her in Greek. 'What in the world can you be talking about?' she said. 'I'm not going anywhere else that I know of. My head has been full of Europe for the last year, and I haven't talked nor thought about any other journey.' Well, I enlightened her as to her expectations, and what do you think she said? You wouldn't be able

to guess, so I'll tell you. She said I was irreverent, and that no one who respected religion would ask such questions as that, and she actually went off in a huff over my wickedness. So, naturally, I have been chary of trying to get information on such 'reverent' subjects ever since."

Whereupon all these silly young ladies laughed long and heartily over this silly talk. Flossy laughed with the rest, partly from the force of habit and partly because this recital struck her as very foolish. Every one of them saw its inconsistent side as plainly as though they had been Christians for years; more plainly, perhaps, for it is very strange what blinded eyes we can get under certain systems of living the religious faith.

Presently the society of these young ladies palled upon themselves, and they agreed one with another that they had been very silly not to go to meeting, and that another evening they would at least discover what was being said before they lost the opportunity for getting seats.

"Stupid set!" said Eurie "who imagined that the crowd would do such a silly thing as to rush

to that meeting, as if there were nothing else to do but to go flying off for a seat the moment the bell rings? I thought there would be crowds out here, and we would make some pleasant acquaintances, and perhaps get a chance to take a boat ride."

And so, in some disgust, they voted to bring the first day at Chautauqua to a sudden close and try tent life.

Silence and darkness reigned in the tent where our girls had disposed of themselves. It was two hours since they had come in. It took more than an hour, and much talking and more laughter, not to mention considerable grumbling on Ruth's part, before everything was arranged to their satisfaction — or, as Ruth expressed it, "to their endurance" for the night.

Three of the girls were sleeping quietly, their fun and their discontents alike forgotten, but Flossy tossed wearily on her bed, turned her pillow and turned it back again, and sought in vain for a quiet spot. With the silence and the darkness her unrest had come upon her again with tenfold force. She felt no nearer a solution of her trouble than she had in the morning;

in fact, the pain had deepened all day, and the only definite feeling she had about it now was that she could not live so; that something must be done; that she must get back to her home and her old life, where she might hope to forget it all and be at peace again.

Into the quiet of the night came a firm, manly step, and the movement of chairs right by her side, so at least it seemed to her. All unused to tent life as she was, a good deal startled she raised herself on one elbow and looked about her in a frightened way before she realized that the sounds came from the tent next to theirs. Before her thoughts were fairly composed they were startled anew; this time with the voice of prayer.

Very distinct the words were on this still night air; every sentence as clear as though it had really been spoken in the same tent. Now, there was something peculiar in the voice; clearly cut and rounded the words were, like that of a man very decided, very positive in his views, and very earnest in his life. There was also a modulation to the syllables that Flossy could not describe, but that she felt. And she knew that

she had heard that voice twice before, once on the boat the evening before and once as they jostled together in the crowd on their way to dinner.

She felt sorry to be unwittingly a listener to a prayer that the maker evidently thought was being heard only by his Savior. But she could not shut out the low and yet wonderfully distinct sentences, and presently she ceased to wish to, for it became certain that he was praying for her. He made it very plain. He called her "that young girl who said to-day that she could not think of thee as her Father; who seems to want to be led by the hand to thee."

Did you ever hear yourself prayed for by an earnest, reverent, pleading voice? Then perhaps you know something of Flossy's feelings as she lay there in the darkness. She had never heard any one pray for her before. So destitute was she of real friends that she doubted much whether there were one person living who had ever before earnestly asked God to make her his child.

That was what this prayer was asking. She lifted the white sleeve of her gown, and wiped

away tear after tear as the pleading voice went on. Very still she was. It seemed to her that she must not lose a syllable of the prayer, for here at last was the help she had been seeking, blindly, and without knowing that she sought, all this long, heavy day. Help? Yes, plain, clear, simple help. How small a thing it seemed to do! "Show her her need of thee, blessed Jesus," thus the prayer ran. And oh! *hadn't* he showed her that? It flashed over her troubled brain then and there: "It is Jesus that I need. It is he who can help me. I believe he can. I believe he is the only one who can." This was her confession of faith. "Then lead her to ask the help of thee that she needs. Just to come to thee as the little child would go to her mother, and say, 'Jesus, take me; make me thy child.'" Only that? Was it such a little, *little* thing to do? How wonderful!

The praying ceased, and the young man who had remembered the stranger to whom God had given him a chance to speak during the day, all unconscious that other ear than God's had heard his words of prayer, laid himself down to quiet sleep. Flossy lay very still. The rain had

ceased during the afternoon, and now some solemn stars were peeping in through the chinks in the tent and the earth was moon-lighted. She raised herself on one elbow and looked around on her companions. How soundly asleep they were!

Another few minutes of stillness and irresolution. Then a white-robed figure slipped softly and quietly to the floor and on her knees, and a low-whispered voice repeated again and again these words:

"Jesus, take me; make me thy child."

It wasn't very long afterward that she lay quietly down on her pillow, and earth went on exactly as if nothing at all had happened — knew nothing at all about it — even the sleeper by her side was totally ignorant of the wonderful tableau that had been acted all about her that evening. But if Eurie Mitchell could have had one little peep into heaven just then what *would* her entranced soul have thought of the music and the enjoyment there? For what *must* it be like when there is "joy in the presence of the angels in heaven"?

CHAPTER IX.

FLEEING.

THE next morning every one of them ran away from the meeting. The way of it was this: as they came up from breakfast and stood at the tent-door discussing the question whether they would go to the early meeting, Mrs. Duane Smithe passed, glanced up at them carelessly, then looked back curiously, and at last turned and came back to them.

"I beg pardon," she said, "but isn't this Miss Erskine? It surely is! I thought I recognized your face, but couldn't be sure in these strange surroundings. And you have a party with you? How delightful! We were just wishing for more ladies. I really don't think it is going to rain much to-day, and we have a lovely prospect in view. You must certainly join us."

Then followed introductions and explanations. Mrs. Duane Smithe was a Saratoga acquaintance of Ruth Erskine, and was *en route* for Jamestown for the day.

"Where is Jamestown?" queried Eurie, who was a very useful member of society, in that she never pretended knowledge that she did not possess, so that you had only to keep still and listen to the answers that were made to her questions in order to know a good deal.

"It is at the head of this lovely little lake, or at the foot, I'm sure I don't know which way to call it, and it is nothing of consequence, of course, but the ride thither is said to be charming, and we are going to take a lunch, and picnic in a private way, just for the fun of getting together, you know, in a more social manner than one can accomplish in this wilderness of people. Isn't it a queer place, Miss Erskine? I am dying to know how you happened to come here."

Ruth arched her eyebrows.

"I confess it is almost as strange as what brought *you* here," she said, smiling.

"I can answer that in an instant. I have a

ridiculous nephew here, who thought that a week of meetings from morning to night would be just a trifle short of paradise, so what did he do but smuggle us all off this way. I shall find it a bore, of course, and the only way to get through with it is to have little pleasure excursions like the one we propose to-day."

Now you know as much about Mrs. Duane Smithe as though I should write about her for a week. It is strange how little we have to say before we have explained to people not only our intellectual but our moral status. Our girls, you will remember, had as little regard for the meetings as girls could have, and they had by this time begun to feel themselves in a strange atmosphere, without acquaintances or gentlemanly attentions, so it took almost no persuasion at all to induce them to join Mrs. Smithe's party, composed of two young ladies and four young gentlemen. It would be difficult to explain to you what a disappointment the decision to spend the day in frolic, instead of going to the meetings, was to Flossy. All the morning her heart had been in a great flutter of happiness over the beautiful day that stretched out before her. To

meet those earnest, eager people again, to hear those hymns, to hear the voice of prayer all about her, to hear the constant allusions that were so strange and so saddening to her yesterday, and that now she understood, how blessed it would be! She had gone about the bewilderments of her toilet in a tent with a serenely happy face, and almost unawares had hummed the refrain of a tune that had already shown itself a favorite at Chautauqua.

"Flossy is like herself this morning," Eurie said, as she heard the happy little song. "I think she has recovered from her home-sickness."

Tents are not convenient places in which to make private remarks. Flossy overheard this one and smiled to herself. Yes, she had gotten over her home-sickness — she had found home. She gave a little exclamation of dismay as she heard the plannings for the day, and said:

"But, Ruth, what about the meetings?"

"Well," Ruth had said, with her most provokingly nonchalant air, "I haven't made any inquiry, but I presume they will continue them all day just the same as if we were here. I

don't *think* they will change the programme on our account."

And Eurie had added, mischievously:

"Flossy is afraid it is not the aristocratic thing to do, not to stay to all the meetings."

"Oh, as to that," Mrs. Smithe had said (she was one of those interesting people who always take remarks seriously), "I assure you it is what the first people on the ground are doing. Of course none of them would be so absurd as to think of attending meetings all the time. The brain wouldn't endure such a strain."

"Of course not," Marion had answered with gravity. "My brain is already very tired. I think yours must be exhausted."

Flossy meditated a daring resolution to stay behind and take her "rest" in the way she coveted; but the impossibility of explaining what would appear to the others as merely an ill-natured freak, and occasion no end of talk, deterred her, and with slow, reluctant steps she followed the merry group down to the wharf.

If those people had stopped long enough to think of it, this disposal of themselves would have had its ludicrous side. Certainly it was a

strange fancy to run away twenty miles with lunches done up in paper in search of a picnic, when Chautauqua was one great picnic ground, stretching out before them in beauty and convenience. But the entire group belonged to that class of people for whom the fancy of the moment, whatever it may be, has infinite charms.

There was plenty of room on the Colonel Phillips. Very few people were traveling in that direction.

"It is really queer," the Captain was overheard to say, "to take a party *away* from the grounds at this hour of the day."

"What an enthusiastic set of people they are about here," Eurie said to Mr. Rawson, one of Mrs. Smithe's party, as they paced the deck together. "The people all talk and act as though there was nowhere to go and nothing to do but attend those meetings. For my part it is a real relief to have a change in the programme."

"Do you find it so?" he asked. "Well, now, I don't agree with you. I think this proceeding is a real bore. My respected aunt is always getting up absurd freaks, and this is one of them, and the worst one, in my opinion, that

she has had for some time. I wanted to go to those meetings to-day — some of them, at least. One isn't obliged to be there every minute. But it looks badly to run away."

Eurie eyed him closely.

"Are you the 'good nephew' that your aunt said thought these meetings only a step below paradise?" she asked, at last. "I wonder you would consent to come."

Mr. Rawson flushed deeply.

"I am not the 'good nephew' at all," he said, trying to laugh. "The 'good one' wouldn't come. My aunt tried all her powers of persuasion on him in vain. But the truth is her eloquence, or her persistence, proved too much for me, though I don't like the looks of it, and I don't feel the pleasure of it, and I am afraid I shall make anything but an agreeable addition to the party. Now that is being frank, isn't it, when I am walking the deck with a young lady?"

"I don't see why that circumstance should make it a surprising thing that you are frank. But I am very sorry for you; perhaps you might prevail on the Captain to put you off

now, and let you swim back; you could get there in time for the sermon. Is there to be a sermon? What *is* it you are so anxious to hear?"

"All of it," he said gloomily. "I beg your pardon for being in so disagreeable a mood; it is defrauding you out of some of your expected pleasure to have a dismal companion. But as I have commenced by being frank I may as well continue. I am dissatisfied with myself. I ought not to have come on this excursion. The truth is, I meant to make Chautanqua a help to me. I need the help badly enough. I am in the rush and whirl of business all the time at home. This is the only two weeks in the year that I am free, and I wanted to make it a great spiritual help to me. I know very well that merely hovering around in such an atmosphere as that at Chautauqua is a help to the Christian, and I came with the full intention of taking in all that I could get of this sort of inspiration, and it chafes me that so early in the meeting I have been led away against my inclinations by a little pressure that I might have resisted, and done no harm to any one. My cousin had the

same sort of influence brought to bear on him, and it had no more effect on him than it would on a stone."

He stopped, and seemed to give Eurie a chance to answer, but she was not inclined, and he added, as if he had just thought his words an implied reproach: "I can understand how, to you young ladies of comparative leisure, with plenty of time to cultivate the spiritual side of your natures, it should seem an unnecessary and perhaps a wearisome thing to attend all these meetings; but you can not understand what it is to be in the whirl of business life, never having time to think, hardly having time to pray, and to get away from it all and go to heaven, as it were, for a fortnight, is something to be coveted by us as a great help."

Once more he waited for Eurie's answer, but it was very different from what he had seemed to expect.

"You might just as well talk to me in the Greek language; I should understand quite as well what you have been saying; I don't think *I have* any spiritual side to my nature; at least it has never been cultivated if I have; and Chau-

tauqua to me is just the place in which to have a good free easy time; go where I like and stay as long as I like; and for once in my life not be bound by conventional forms. If heaven is anything like that I shouldn't object to it; but I'm sure your and my idea of it would differ. There, I've been frank now, and shocked you, I know. I see it in every line of your face. Poor fellow! I don't know what you will do, for there isn't a single one of us who has the least idea what you mean by that sort of talk, unless you have some young ladies of a different type in your party, and from their manner I rather doubt it."

She had shocked him. He looked not only pained but puzzled.

"I am very sorry," he stammered. "I mean surprised. Yes, and disappointed. Of course I am that. I think I had imagined that it was only Christians who could be attracted to Chautauqua at all; I meant to come to stay through all the services."

"Your aunt, for instance?" Eurie said, inquiringly.

"My aunt is a Christian," he answered, "and a sincere one, too, though I see for some reason

you don't think so. There are degrees in Christianity, Miss Mitchell, just as there are in amiability, or culture, or beauty."

"Mr. Rawson!" called a voice from the other end at this moment, and he in obedience to the call found Eurie a seat near some of her party and went away, only stopping to say, in low tones:

"I am sorry it is all 'Greek' to you; you would enjoy understanding it, I am sure."

It so happened that those two people did not exchange another word together that day, but Eurie had got her thrust when and where she least expected it. She had taken it for granted that not a single fanatic was of their party. In the secret of her wise heart she denominated all the earnest people at Chautauqua fanatics, and all the half-hearted people hypocrites. Only she, who stood outside and felt nothing, was sincere and wise.

Meantime Marion had undertaken a strange task. Mr. Charlie Flint was the gentleman who had drawn his chair near her, and said, as he drew a long breath:

"It is exceedingly pleasant to breathe air

once more that isn't heavy with psalm singing I think they are running that thing a little too steep over there. Who imagined that they were going to have meeting every minute in the day and evening, and give nobody a chance to breathe?"

"Have they exhausted you already?" Marion asked. "Let me see, this is the morning of the second day, is it not?"

"Oh, as to myself, I was exhausted before I commenced it. I am only speaking a word for the lunatics who think they enjoy it. I am one of the victims to our cousin's whim. He expects to get me converted here, I think, or something of that sort."

"I wouldn't be afraid of it," Marion said, in disgust. "I don't believe there is the least danger."

Mr. Charlie chose to consider this as a compliment, and bowed and smiled, and said:

"Thanks. Now tell me why, please."

"You don't look like that class of people who are affected in that way."

He was wonderfully interested, and begged at

once to know why. Marion had it in her heart to say, "Because they all look as though they had some degree of brain as well as body," but even she had a little regard left for feelings; so she contented herself with saying, savagely:

"Oh, they, as a rule, are the sort of people who think there is something in life worth doing and planning for, and you look as though that would be too much trouble."

Now, Mr. Charlie by no means liked to be considered devoid of energy, so he said:

"Oh, you mistake. I think there are several things worth doing. But this eternal going to meeting, and whining over one's soul, is not to my taste."

"You think that it is more worth your while to take ladies out to ride and walk, and carry their parasols and muffs for them, and things of that sort. Since we are made for the purpose of staying here and showing our fine clothes for all eternity, of course it is foolish to have anything to do with one's soul, that can only last for a few years or so!"

She hardly realized herself the intense scorn

there was in her voice, and as for Charlie Flint he muttered to himself:

"Upon my word, she is one of them; of the bitterest sort, too! What in creation is she doing here? Why didn't she stay there and preach?"

CHAPTER X.

HOW THE "FLITTING" ENDED.

AS for Ruth, Erskine if she had been asked whether she was enjoying the day, she would hardly have known what answer to make; she could not even tell why the excursion was not in every respect all that it had promised in the morning. She had no realization of how much the atmosphere of the day before lingered around her, and made her notice the contrast between the people of yesterday and the people of to-day. Mrs. Smithe, if she were a Christian, as her nephew insisted, was one of the most unfortunate specimens of that class for Ruth Erskine to meet; because she was a woman who entered into pleasure and fashion, and entertainments of all sorts, with zest and energy

and only in matters of religious interest seemed to lose all life and zeal.

Now Ruth Erskine, calm as a summer morning herself over all matters pertaining to the souls of people in general, and her own in particular, was yet exceedingly fond of seeing other people act in a manner that she chose to consider consistent with their belief; therefore she despised Mrs. Smithe for what she was pleased to term her "hypocrisy." At the same time, while at Saratoga, she had quite enjoyed her society. They rode together on fine mornings, sipped their "Congress" together before lunch, and attended hops together in the evenings. Now the reason why Mrs. Smithe's society had so suddenly palled upon her, and the words that she was pleased to call "conversation" become such vapid things, Ruth did not know, and did not for one instant attribute to Chautauqua; and yet that meeting had already stamped its impression upon her. From serene, indifferent heights she liked to look down upon and admire earnestness; therefore Chautauqua, despite all her disgust over the common surroundings and awkward accommodations, had pleased her fancy and

arrested her attention more than she herself realized. It was her fate to be thrown almost constantly with Mrs. Smithe during the day, and before the afternoon closed she was surfeited. She heartily wished herself back to the grounds, and found herself wondering what they were singing, and whether the service of song was really very interesting.

One episode in her day had interested her, and she could not tell whether it had most amused or annoyed her. One of their party was conversing with a gentleman as she came up. She had just time to observe that he was young and fine-looking, when the two turned to her, and she was introduced to the stranger.

"You are from Chautauqua?" he said, speaking rapidly and earnestly. "Grand meeting, isn't it? Going to be better than last year, I think. Were you there? No? Then you don't know what a treat you are to have. I'm very sorry to lose to-day. It has been a good day, I know. The programme was rich; but a matter of business made it necessary to be away. It is unfortunate for me that I am so near home. If I were two or three hundred miles away

where the business couldn't reach me, I should get more benefit. Miss Erskine, what is your opinion of the direct spiritual results of this gathering? I do not mean upon Christians. No one, of course, can doubt its happy influence upon our hearts and lives. But I mean, are you hopeful as to the reaching of many of the unconverted, or do you consider its work chiefly among us?"

Such a volley of words? They fairly poured forth! And the speaker was so intensely in earnest, and so assured in his use of that word "we," as if it were a matter that was entirely beyond question that she was one of the magic "we." She did not know how to set out to work to enlighten him. In fact, she gave little thought to that part of the matter, but, instead, fell to wondering what *was* her idea — whether she did expect to see results of any sort from the great gathering, and that being the case, what she expected? "Spiritual results," she said to herself, and a smile hovered over her face — what *were* "spiritual results?" She knew nothing about them. *Were* there any such things? Eu rie Mitchell, had such a question occurred to her

would have asked it aloud at once and enjoyed the sense of shocking her auditor. But Ruth did not like to shock people; she was too much of a lady for that.

"What proportion of that class of people are here, do you think?" she said, at last. "Are not the most of them professing Christians.?"

"Precisely the question that interests me. I should really like to know. I wonder if there is no way of coming at it? We might call for a rising vote of all who loved the Lord; could we not? Wouldn't it be a beautiful sight?—a great army standing up for him! I incline to your opinion that the most of them are Christians, or at least a large proportion. But I should very much like to know just how far this idea had touched the popular heart, so as to call out those who are not on the Lord's side."

"They would simply have come for the fun of the thing, or the novelty of it," she said, feeling amused again that almost of necessity she was speaking of herself and using the pronoun "they." What would this gentleman think if he should bring about that vote of which he spoke and happen to see her among the seated ones?

"'A wolf in sheep's clothing' he would suppose me to be," she said to herself. "But I am sure I have not told him that I belong to the 'we' at all. If he chooses to assume things in that way, it is not my fault."

Apparently he answered both her expressed sentence and her thought:

"I do not think so," he said, earnestly. "I doubt if any have come simply for fun or for novelty. There are better places in which to gratify both tastes. I believe there is more actual interest in this subject, even among the unconverted, than many seem to think. They are reasonable beings. They must think, and many of them, no doubt, think to good purpose. It may not be clear even to themselves for what they have come; But I believe in some instances, to say the least, it will prove to have been the call of the Spirit."

Again Ruth felt herself forced to smile, not at the earnestness — she liked that, but there was her party, and she rapidly reviewed them — Marion, with her calm, composed, skeptical views, indifferent alike to the Christian or unchristian way of doing things; Eurie, who lived

and breathed for the purpose of having what in wild moments she called "a high time;" Flossy with her dainty wardrobe, and her dainty ways, and her indifference to everything that demanded thought or care. Which of them had been "called by the Spirit"? There was herself, and for the time she gave a little start. What had *she* come to Chautauqua for? After all she was the only one who seemed to be absolutely without a reason for being there. Marion's avowed intention had been to make some money; Eurie's to have a free and easy time; Flossy had come as she did everything else, because "they" did. But now, what about Ruth Erskine? She was not wont to do as others did, unless it happened to please her. What had been her motive? It was strange to feel that she really did not know. What if this strange speaking young man were right, and she had been singled out by the Spirit of God! The thought gave her a thrill, not of pleasure, but of absolute, nervous fear. What did *she* know of that gracious Spirit? What did she know of Christ? To her there was no beauty in him. She desired simply to be left alone. She was silent so long that her compan-

ion gave her a very searching review from under his heavy eyebrows, and then his face suddenly lighted as if he had solved a problem.

"May I venture to prophesy that you have some friend here whom you would give much to feel had been drawn here by the very Spirit of God?" He spoke the words eagerly and with earnestness, but with utmost respect, and added, "If I am right I will add the name to my list for special prayer. Do not think me rude, please. I know how pleasant it is to feel there is a union of desire in prayer. I have enjoyed that help often. We do not always need to know who those are for whom we pray. God knows them, and that is the needful thing. Good-evening. I am glad to have met you. It is pleasant to have additions to our list of fellow-heirs."

How bright his smile was as he said those words! And how thoroughly manly and yet how strikingly childlike had been his words and his trust! Ruth watched him as he walked rapidly away to overtake a friend who had just passed them. Do you remember a certain gentleman, Harold Wayne by name, who had walked

with them, walked especially with Ruth, down to the depot on the morning of departure, who had toyed with her fan and complained that he could not imagine what they were going to bury themselves out there for? Ruth thought of him now, and the contrast between his lazily exquisite air and drawling words and the fresh, earnest life that glowed in this young man's veins brought a positive quiver of disgust over her handsome face. There was no shadow of a smile upon it now. Instead, she felt a nameless dread. How strange the talk had been! To what had she committed herself by her silence and his blunders? *She* pray for any one! What a queer thing that would be to do. *She* anxious that any one should be led by the spirit of God! The spirit of God frightened her. For whom would this young man pray? Not certainly for any friend of hers; yet he would put the name of some stranger in his prayers. He was thoroughly in earnest, and he was the sort of a man to do just what he said. God, he had said, would understand whom he meant. For whom would God count those prayers? For **her**? And that thought also frightened her.

"They are all lunatics, I verily believe, from the leaders to the followers," she said in irritation, and then she wished herself at home. During the remainder of the day she was engaged in trying to shake off the impression that the stranger had left upon her. Go where she would, say what she might, and she really exerted herself to be brilliant and entertaining, there followed her around the memory of those great, earnest eyes when he said, "I will add the name to my list for special prayer." What name? He knew hers. He would say, doubtless, "Her friend for whom she was anxious." But the one to whom he prayed would know there was no such person. What would *He* do with that earnest prayer? For she knew it would be earnest. She was not used to theological mazes, and if ever a girl was heartily glad when a day of pleasuring was over, and the boat had touched again at the Chautauqua wharf, it was Ruth Erskine.

As for Flossy, it so happened that Charlie Flint, after Marion had startled and disgusted him, sought refuge with her. She was pretty and dainty, and did not look strong-minded;

not in the least as if her forte was to preach, so he made ready to have a running fire of small talk with her.

This had been Flossy's power in conversation for several years. He had judged her rightly there. But do you remember with whom her morning had commenced? Do you know that all the day thus far she had seemed to herself to be shadowed by a glorious presence, who walked steadily beside her, before her, on either hand, to shield, and help and bless?

It was very sweet to Flossy, and she was very happy; happier than she had ever been in her life. She smiled to herself as the others chatted, she hummed in undertone the refrain of a hymn that she had caught in a near tent that morning:

"I am so glad that Jesus loves me."

Wasn't she glad! Was there anything better to find in all this world than the assurance of this truth? She felt that the thought was large enough to fill heaven itself. After that, what hope was there for Charlie Flint and his small talk? Still, he tried it, and if ever he did hard work it was during that talk. Flossy was sweet

and cheery, but preoccupied. There was a tantalizingly pleasant smile on her face, as if her thoughts might be full of beauty, but none of them seemed to appear in her words. She did not flush over his compliments, nor was she disturbed at his bantering.

He got out of all patience.

"I beg pardon," he said, in his flippantly gallant way, "but I'm inclined to think you are very selfish; you are having your enjoyment all to yourself. To judge by the face which you have worn all day your heart is bubbling over with it, and yet you think about it instead of giving me a bit."

Flossy looked up with a shy, sweet smile that was very pleasant to see, and the first blush he had been able to call forth that day glowed on her cheeks. Was it true? she questioned within herself. Was she being selfish in this, her new joy? Ought she to try to tell him about it? Would he understand? and could she speak about such things, anyway? She didn't know how. She shrank from it, and yet perhaps it would be so pleasant to him to know. No, on the whole, she did not think it would be pleas-

ant. They had not talked of the meetings nor of religious matters at all; but for all that the subtle magnetism that there is about some people had told her that Charlie Flint would not sympathize in her new hopes and joys.

Well, if that were so, ought she not all the more to tell him, so that he might know that to one more person Christ had proved himself a reality, and not the spiritual fancy that he used to seem to her? Flossy, you see, was taking long strides that first day of her Christian experience, and was reaching farther than some Christians reach who have been practicing for years. Something told her that here was a chance of witnessing for the one who had just saved her. She thought these thoughts much more quickly than it has taken me to write them, and then she spoke:

"Have I been selfish? I do not know but I have. It is all so utterly new that I hardly know how I am acting; but it is true that my heart has been as light as a bird's all day. The truth is, I have found a friend here at Chautauqua who has just satisfied me."

"Have you indeed!" said Mr. Charlie, giving, in spite of his well-bred effort to quell it, an amused little laugh. And in his heart he said, "What a ridiculous little mouse she is! I wonder if they have the wedding day set already, and if she will announce it to me?" Then aloud: "How very fortunate you have been! I wish I could find a friend so easily as that! I wonder if I am acquainted with him? Would you mind telling me his name?"

And then Flossy answered just one word in a low voice that was tremulous with feeling, and at the same time wonderfully clear, and with a touch of joy in it that would not be suppressed, "Jesus."

Then it was that the exquisite young fop at her side was utterly dumbfounded. He could not remember ever before in his life being so completely taken by surprise and dismay that he had not a word to answer. But this time he said not a single word. He did not even attempt an answer, but paced the length of the deck beside her in utter and confused silence, then abruptly seated her, still in silence, and went hurriedly

away. Flossy, occupied with the rush of feeling that this first witnessing for the new name called forth, gave little heed to his manner, and was indifferent to his departure. He was right as to one thing. Her love was still selfish: it was so new and sweet to her that it occupied all her heart, and left no room as yet for the outside world who knew not this friend of hers. They were almost at the dock now, and the glimmer of the Chautauqua lights was growing into a steady brightness. As she stood leaning over the boat's side and watching the play of the silver waves, there brushed past her one who seemed to be very quietly busy. One hand was full of little leaflets, and he was dropping one on each chair and stool as he passed. She glanced at the one nearest her and read the title: "The True Friend," and it brought an instant flush of brightness to her face to understand those words and feel that the Friend was hers. Then she glanced at the worker and recognized his face. He had prayed for her. She could not forget *that* face. It was plain also that his eyes fell on her. He knew her, and something in her face prompted the low-toned

sentence as he paused before her: "You have found the Father, I think."

And Flossy, with brightening eyes, answered, quickly, "Yes, I have."

And then the boat touched at the wharf, and the crowd elbowed their way out.

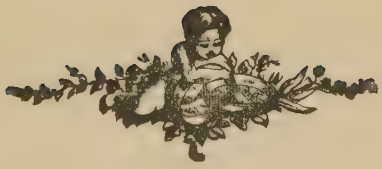
There were two opinions expressed about that excursion by two gentlemen as they made their way up the avenue. One of the gentleman was clerical, and spectacled, and solemn.

"There go a boat-load of excursionists," he said to his companion.

"They come, as likely as not delegates, from some church or Sabbath-school, and the way they do their work is to go off for a frolic and be gone all day. I saw them when I left this morning. That is a specimen of a good deal of the dissipation that is going on here under the guise of religion. I don't know about it; sometimes I am afraid more harm than good will be done."

The other speaker was Mr. Charlie Flint, and as he rushed past these two he said to *his* companion, "Confound it all! Talk about getting away from these meetings! It's no use; it can't

be done. A fellow might just as well stay here and run every time the bell rings. I heard more preaching to-day on this excursion than I did yesterday; and a good deal more astonishing preaching, too."



CHAPTER XI.

HEART TOUCHES.

MARION gave her hair an energetic twist as she made her toilet the next morning, and announced her determination.

"This day is to be devoted conscientiously to the legitimate business that brought me to this region. Yesterday's report will have to be copied from the Buffalo papers, or made out of my own brain. But I'm going to work to-day. I have a special interest in the programme for this morning. The subject for the lecture just suits me."

"What is it?" Eurie asked, yawning, and wishing there was another picnic in progress Neither heart nor brain were particularly interested in Chautauqua.

"Why, it is 'The Press and the Sunday-school.' Of course the press attracts me, as I intend to belong to the staff when I get through teaching young ideas."

"But what about the Sunday-school?" Ruth questioned, with a calm voice. "You can not be expected to have any special interest in that. You never go to such an institution, do you?"

"I was born and brought up in one. But that isn't the point. The subject to-day is Sunday-school literature, I take it. The subject is strung together, 'The Press and the Sunday-school,' without any periods between them, and I'm exceedingly interested in that, for just as soon as I get time I'm going to write a Sunday-school book."

This announcement called forth bursts of laughter from all the girls.

"Why not?" Marion said, answering the laugh. "I hope you don't intimate that I can't do it. I don't know anything easier to do. You

just have to gather together the most improbable set of girls and boys, and rack your brains for things that they never *did* do, or *could* do, or *ought* to do, and paste them all together with a little 'good talk,' and you have your book, as orthodox as possible. Do any of you know anything about Dr. Walden? He is the speaker. I presume he is as dry as a stick, and won't give me a single idea that I can weave into my book. I'm going to begin it right away. Girls, I'm going to put you all in, only I can't decide which shall be the good one. Flossy, do you suppose there is enough imagination in me to make you into a book saint? They always have a saint, you know."

There was a pretty flush on Flossy's cheek, but she answered, brightly:

"You might try, Marion, and I'll engage to practice on the character, if it is really and truly a good one."

"I had a glimpse of Dr. Walden," Eurie said, answering the question. "He was pointed out to me yesterday. He looked dignified enough to write a theological review. *I'm* not going to hear him. What's the use? I came for fun,

and I'm going in search of it all this day. I have studied the programme, and there is just one thing that I'm going to attend, and that is Frank Beard's 'chalk talk.' I know that will be capital, and he won't bore one with a sermon poked in every two minutes."

So the party divided for the day. Marion and Ruth went to the stand, and Flossy strayed to a side tent, and what happened to her you shall presently hear. Eurie wandered at her fancy, and enjoyed a "stupid time," so she reported.

Marion's pencil moved rapidly over the paper almost as soon as Dr. Walden commenced, until presently she whispered in dismay to Ruth:

"I do wish he would say something to leave out! This letter will be fearfully long. How sharp he is, isn't he?"

Then she scribbled again. Ruth had the benefit of many side remarks.

"My!" Marion said, with an accompanying grimace. "What an army of books! All for Sunday-schools. Three millions given out every Sunday! Does that seem possible! Brother Hart, I'm afraid you are mistaken. Didn't he say that was Dr. Hart's estimate, Ruthie? There

is certainly a good chance for mine, if so many are needed every week. I shall have to go right to work at it. What if I *should* write one, Ruth, and what if it should *take*, and all the millions of Sunday-schools want it at once! Just as likely as not. I am a genius. They never know it until afterward. I shall certainly put you in, Ruthie, in some form. So you are destined to immortality, remember."

"I wish you wouldn't whisper so much," whispered back Ruth. "People are looking at us in an annoyed way. What is the matter with you, Marion? I never knew you to run on in such an absurd way. That is bad enough for Eurie!"

"I'm developing," whispered Marion. "It is the 'reflex influence of Chautauqua' that you hear so much about."

Then she wrote this sentence from Dr. Walden's lips:

"Every author whose books go into the Sabbath-school is as much a teacher in that school as though he had classes there. A good book is a book that will aid the teacher in his work of bringing souls to Christ. I have known the

earnest teaching of months to be defeated by one single volume of the wrong kind being placed in the hands of the scholar."

Suddenly Marion sat upright, slipped her pencil and note-book into her pocket, and wrote no more. A sentence in that address had struck home. This determination to enter the lists as a writer was not all talk. She had long ago decided to turn her talents in that direction as the easiest thing in the line of literature, whither her taste ran. She had read many of the standard Sunday-school books; read them with amused eyes and curling lips, and felt entirely conscious that she could match them in intellectual power and interest, and do nothing remarkable then. But there rang before her this sentence:

"Every author whose books go into the Sabbath-school is as much a teacher in that school as though he had classes there." A teacher in the Sabbath-school! Actually a *teacher*. She had never intended that. She had no desire to be a hypocrite. She had no desire to lead astray. *Could* she write a book that young people ought to bring from the Sabbath-school with them, and have it say nothing about Christ and heaven and

the Christian life? Surely she could not be a teacher without teaching of these things. *Must* she teach them incidentally? Was saying nothing about them speaking against them? Dr. Walden more than intimated this.

"After all," she said, speaking to Ruth as the address closed, "I don't think I shall commence my book yet."

"Why?"

"Oh, because I am sacred." Then, impatiently, after a moment's silence, during which they changed their seats, "I'm disgusted with Chautauqua! It is going to spoil me. I feel my ambition oozing out at the ends of my toes, instead of my fingers as I had designed. Everybody is so awfully solemn, and has so much to say about eternity, it seems we can't whisper to each other without starting something that doesn't even end in eternity. But, wasn't he logical and eloquent?"

"I don't know," Ruth said, absently. And she wondered if Marion knew how true her words were. Ruth had heard scarcely a word of Dr. Walden's address since that last whisper, "So you are destined to immortality, remem-

ber." Words spoken in jest, and yet thrilling her through and through with a solemn meaning. She had always known and always believed this. She was no skeptic, yet her heart had never taken it in, with a great throb of anxiety, as it did at that moment. *Was* she being led of the Spirit of God?

The two merely changed their positions and looked about them a little, and then prepared to give attention to the next entertainment, which was a story from Emily Huntington Miller Marion was the only one who was in the least familiar with her, she being the only one who had felt that absorbing interest in juvenile literature that had led her to keep pace with the times.

"I'm disposed to listen to *her* with all due respect and attention," she said, as she rearranged herself and got out her note-book. "She is one of the few people who seem not to have bidden a solemn farewell to their common sense when they set out to entertain the children. I have read everything she ever wrote, and liked it, too. I set out to make an idol of her in my more juvenile days. I used to think that the height of

my ambition would be attained if I could have a long look at her. I'm going to try it to-day, and see if it satisfies me; though we are such aspiring and unsatisfied creatures that I strongly suspect I shall go on reaching out for something else even after *this* experience."

Very little whispering was done after that for some time. Although Marion made light of her youthful dreams, there was a strong feeling of excitement and interest clustering around this first sight of the woman whose name she had known so long; and something in the fair, sweet face and cultured voice fascinated and held her, much as she had fancied in her earlier days would be the case. She frowned when she heard the request to reporters to "lay aside their pencils." She had meant to earn laurels by reporting this delicious bit of imagery, set in between the graver sermons and lectures; but, after all, it was a rest to give herself up to the uninterrupted enjoyment of taking in every word and tone — taking it in for her own private benefit. "The Parish of Fair Haven." How heartily she enjoyed it. The refined and delicate, and yet keen and intense satire under-

lying the whole quaint original story, was of just the nature to hold and captivate her. She was just in the mood to enjoy it, too. For was it not aimed at that class of people who awakened her own keenest sense of satire — the so-called "Christian world"? She did not belong to it, you know; in her own estimation was entirely without the pale of its sarcasm; stranded on a high and majestic rock of unbelief in everything, and in a condition to be amused at the follies of people who played at belief; and treated what they *played* was solemn realities as if they were cradle stories or nicely woven fiction. There was no listener in all that crowd who so enjoyed the keen play of wit and the sharp home thrusts as did Marion Wilber. Ruth was a little undecided what to think; she did not belong to the class who were hit, to be sure, but her father always gave largely to missions whenever the solicitor called on him: she had heard his name mentioned with respect as one of the most benevolent men of the day; she did not quite like the very low and matter-of-course place which Mrs. Miller's view of the mission question gave him. According to the people of

Fair Haven, to give one's thousands to the cause was the most commonplace thing in the world—*not* to do so was to be an inhuman wretch. Ruth didn't quite like it — in truth she was just enough within the circle of modern Christianity to feel herself slightly grazed by the satire.

"It is absurd," she said to Marion as they went up the hill. "What is the sense in a woman talking in that way? As if people, were they ever so good and benevolent, *could* get themselves up in that ridiculous manner! If we live in the world at all we *have* to have a little regard for propriety. I wonder if she thinks one's entire time and money should be devoted to the heathen?"

Marion answered her with spirit.

"Oh, *don't* try to apologize for the folly that is going on in this world in the name of religion! It can't be done, and sensible people only make fools of themselves if they attempt it. There is nothing plainer or more impossible to deny than that church-members give and work and pray for the heathen as though they were a miserable and abominable set of brutes, who ought to be exterminated from the face of the

earth, but for whom some ridiculous fanatics called 'missionaries' had projected a wild scheme to do something; and *they*, forsooth, must be kept from starving somehow, even though they had been unmitigated fools; so the paltry collections are doled out, with sarcastic undertones about the 'waste of money,' and the sin of missionaries wearing clothes, and expecting to have things to eat after throwing themselves away Don't talk to me! I've been to missionary societies; I know all about it. The whole system is one that is exactly calculated to make infidels. I believe Satan got it up, because he knew in just what an abominable way the dear Christians would go at it, and what a horrid farce they would make of it all."

"It is a great pity you are not a Christian, Marion. I never come in contact with any one who understands their duty so thoroughly as you appear to, and I think you ought to be practicing."

Ruth said this calmly enough. She was not particularly disturbed; she did not belong to them, you know; but for all that she was remotely connected with those who did, and was

just enough jarred to make her give this quiet home thrust. Oddly enough it struck Marion as it never had before, although the same idea had been suggested to her by other nettled mortals. It was true that she had realized how the practicing ought to be done, and a vague wish that she *did* believe in it all, and could work by their professed standard with *all her soul*, flitted over her.

Meantime Flossy was being educated. The morning work had touched her from a different standpoint. She had not heard Dr. Walden; instead she had wandered into a bit of holy ground. She began by losing her way. It is one of the easiest things to do at Chautauqua. The avenues cross and recross in an altogether bewildering manner to one not accustomed to newly laid-out cities; and just when one imagines himself at the goal for which he started, lo! there is woods, and nothing else anywhere. Another attempt patiently followed for an hour has the exasperating effect of bringing him to the very point from which he started. Such an experience had Flossy, when by reason of her loitering propensities she became detached from

her party, and tried to find her own way to the stand. A whole hour of wandering, then a turn into perfect chaos. She had no more idea where she was than if she had been in the by-ways of London. Clearly she must inquire the way. She looked about her. It was queer to be lost in the woods, and yet be surrounded by tents and people. She stooped and peeped timidly into a tent, the corner of which was raised to admit air, and from which the sound of voices issued.

"Come in," said a pleasant voice, and the bright-faced hostess arose from the foot of her bed and came forward with greeting, exactly as though they had been waiting for Flossy all the morning. "Would you like to rest? Come right in, we have plenty of room and the most lovely accommodations," and a silvery laugh accompanied the words, while the little lady whisked a tin basin from a low stool, and dusting it rapidly with her handkerchief proffered her guest a seat, with as graceful an air as though the stool had been an easy-chair upholstered in velvet. The only other sitting-place, the low bed, was full, there being three ladies

tucked about on it in various stages of restful work, for they had books and papers strewn about, and each held a pencil poised as if ready for action at a moment.

"I'm afraid I intrude," Flossy said, sweetly; "but the truth is, I have lost my friends and my way, and I really am an object of pity, for I have been wandering up hill and down, till my strength is less than it was."

"Poor child!" came sympathetically from the bed, spoken by the eldest of the ladies, while another rapidly improvised a fan out of the *Sunday-School Times*, and passed it to her.

Meantime Flossy looked about her in secret delight. Something about the air of the tent and the surroundings, and an indefinite something about every one of the ladies, told her as plainly as words could have done that she was among the workers; that she had unwittingly and gracefully slipped behind the scenes, and had been cordially admitted to one of the workshops of Chautauqua; and there were *so* many things she wanted to know!

CHAPTER XII.

FLOSSY AT SCHOOL.

SHE hadn't the least idea who they were, but, like an earnest little diplomatist, she set to work to find out.

"I started for the auditorium," she said. "I wanted to hear Dr. Walden, but he has had time to make a long speech and get through since I first started. I think it must be nearly eleven."

"No," they said laughing, "it is only half past ten." Her wanderings had not been so long as they seemed; but it was hardly worth while to try to hear anything from him now, she would not be at all likely to get a seat; and, besides, his time was nearly over. She would better wait and go down with them in time for Mrs. Miller.

"We were obliged to miss Dr. Walden," the elder lady explained. "We disliked to very

much; probably it was as instructive as anything we shall get; but we had work that had to be done, so we ran away."

"Do you have to bring work to Chautauqua with you?" Flossy asked, with insinuating sweetness. "How very busy you must be! I would have tried to run away from my work for two weeks if I had been you."

The bright little hostess laughed.

"Chautauqua *makes* work," she said, "and somebody has to get ready for it. This lady beside me expects an overwhelming Sabbath class here, and much time has to be given to the lesson. We lesser mortals are ostensibly going to help her, but in reality we are going to look and see how she does it."

"Have you found out?" Flossy asked in a little tremor of delight. This was what she wanted, to know how to do it all.

The lady who had been pointed out as teacher answered her quickly, so far as her words could be said to be an answer:

"Are you a Sabbath-school teacher?"

"No," Flossy said, flushing and feeling like a naughty child whose curiosity had led her into

mischief. "No, I am not *anything*, but I want to be; I don't know how to work at all in any way, but I want to learn."

"Are you looking for work to do for the Master?" the same lady asked, with a sweet cheery voice and smile, not at all as if this were a subject which she must touch cautiously.

"Yes," Flossy said, her cheeks all in a glow. "She did not know how to work, she had but just found out that she wanted to; indeed she had but yesterday known anything of Him."

Then this unusual company of ladies came with one consent and eager eyes and voices and took her hand, and said how glad they were to welcome her to the ranks. They knew she would love the work, and the rewards were so sure and so precious. All this was new and strange and delightful to Flossy. Then they began each eagerly to tell about their work; they were all infant or primary class teachers, and all enthusiasts. Who that has to do with the teaching of little children and attains to any measure of success but is largely gifted with this same element? They had been talking over and preparing their lesson together, and

they talked it over again before the bewildered Flossy, who had no idea that there was such a wonderful story in all the Bible as they were developing out of a few bare details.

"We had just reached the vital point of the entire lesson," explained the leader, "the place where every true teacher needs most help; where, having arranged all her facts and got them in martial order in her brain, she wants to know the best way of making those facts of practical *present* service to the little children who will be before her, and at this point I think every teacher needs to go to the fountain head for help. We were just going to pray; you would like, perhaps, to join us for just a few moments."

"If she wouldn't intrude," Flossy said, timidly, in a tremor of satisfaction; and then for the first time in her life she bowed with a company of her own sex, and heard the simple earnest voice of prayer. The words were startlingly direct and simple, and Flossy, who had been full of mysterious awe on this question, and who much doubted whether her timid whispers alone in her tent could have been called prayer, was reassured and comforted.

If *this* were prayer, it was simply talking in a sweet, natural voice, and in the most simple and natural language, with a dear and wise friend. It was the most quiet and yet the most confident way of asking for just what one wanted, and nothing more. It was what Flossy needed.

She took long strides in her religious education there on her knees; and as they went out from that tent and down the hill to the meeting, there was born in her heart an eager determination to enter the lists as a Sabbath-school teacher the very first opportunity, and to pray her lesson into her heart, having done what she could to get it into her head. If her anxious and well-nigh discouraged pastor could have been gifted with supernatural and prophetic vision, and could have seen that resolve, and, looking ahead, the fruit that was to be borne from it, how would his anxious soul have thanked God and taken courage!

In this mood came Flossy to listen to the story of "The Parish of Fair Haven," as it flowed down to her in Mrs. Miller's smooth-toned musical voice. One who comes from her knees to

listen is sure to find the seed if it has been put in. Flossy found hers.

Often in the course of her young life she had been at church and sat in the attitude of listener while a missionary sermon was preached. She had heard, perhaps, ten sentences from those sermons, not ten consecutive sentences, but words scattered here and there through the whole; from these she had gathered that there was to be a collection taken for the cause of Missions. Just where the money was to go, and just what was to be done with it when it arrived, what had been accomplished by missionary effort, what the Christian world was hoping for in that direction — all these things Flossy Shipley knew no more about than her kitten did.

Perhaps it was not strange then, that although abundantly supplied with pin-money, she had never in her life given anything to the work of Missions. Not that she would not willingly have deposited some of her money in the box for whatever use the authorities chose to make of it had she happened to have any; but young ladies as a rule have been educated to imagine

that there is one day in the week in which their portmonnaies can be off duty. There being no shopping to be done, no worsteds to match, no confectionary to tempt what earthly use for money? So it was locked up at home. This, at least, is the way in which Flossy Shipley had argued, without knowing that she argued at all.

Now she was looking at things with new eyes; the same things that she had heard of hundreds of times, but how different they were! What a remarkable scheme it was, this carrying the story of Jesus to those miserable ignorant ones, getting them ready for the heaven that had been made ready for them! The people of "Fair Haven" did not appear to her like lunatics, as they did to Ruth Erskine. She was not, you will remember, of the class who had argued this question in their ignorance, and quieted their consciences with the foolish assertion that the church collections went to pay secretaries and treasurers and erect splendid public buildings. She belonged, rather, to that less hopeless class who had never thought at all. Now, as she listened, her eyes brightened with feeling and her cheeks glowed. The whole sub-

lime *romance* of Missions was being mapped out to her on the face of that quaint allegory, and her heart responded warmly.

Curiously enough, her first throbs of conscience were not for herself but for her father. The portly gentleman who occasionally sat at the head of the Shipley pew, and who certainly never parted company with his pocket-book on Sabbath or on any other day, did *he* give liberally to Foreign Missions?

She could not determine as to the probabilities of the case. He was counted a liberal man — people liked to come to him to start subscriptions; but Flossy felt instinctively that a subscription paper with her father's name leading it was different, someway, from a quiet, baize-lined box, and no noise nor words. She doubted whether the cause had been materially helped by him.

She lost some sentences of the story while she planned ways for interesting her father and securing liberal donations from him; and then she was suddenly startled back to personality by hearing some astounding statements from the reader.

"It would be *so* easy to drop into a household box the price of an apple, or a paper, or a glass of peanuts, and yet who does it? Why, there are young ladies who will actually not give two cents a week from the money that they waste!"

The rich blood mounted in waves to Flossy's forehead. Apples and papers were not in her line, but *peanuts!* wasn't there a certain stand which she passed almost daily on her way down town, and did she ever pass it without indulging in a glass of peanuts? Neither was that the end. Why, once started on that list, and her wastes were almost numberless. How fond she was of cream dates, and how expensive they were; and oranges, the tempting yellow globes were always shining at her from certain windows as she passed.

Oh, they were just endless, her temptations and her falls in that direction — only who had ever supposed that there was any harm in this lavish treatment of herself and of any friends whom she happened to meet? Yet it was true that she had never given any money at all to the work of sending the Bible to those who are without it.

"They will not give two cents a week," said Mrs. Miller. It was true: she had not given "two cents a week," or even two cents a year —she had simply ignored the existence of such a need for money. True, she had not been a Christian; but she was surprised to see how little this refuge served her.

"I have been a human being," she told herself, with a flush on her face, "and I ought to have had sufficient interest in humanity to have wanted those poor creatures civilized."

But there was another thrust preparing for Flossy. The reader presently touched upon one item of expenditure common to ladies, namely, kid gloves; and made the bewildering statement that economy in this matter, to the degree that needless purchases should be avoided, would treble the fund in the missionary treasury! It could not be that from among that sea of faces the speaker had singled out Flossy Shipley, and yet that is the way it seemed to her. If there was any one expense which stood out glaringly above another in her list of luxuries it was kid gloves. They must be absolutely immaculate as to quality, shade and fit, and she remorselessly

consigned them to the waste-bag at the first hint of rip or change of color. How strange that Mrs. Miller should have pitched upon just that item, and what an amazing declaration to make concerning it!

It was very strange, had any one been looking on to observe it, the manner in which this young girl was being educated. It is doubtful if a whole year of church work in the regular home routine, listening to the stated, statistical sermon of her pastor, that sermon which presupposes so much more knowledge than people possess, would have *begun* to do for Flossy what the strange, fanciful, pungent story of "Fair Haven" did.

Before that hour was closed she had settled within her resolute little heart a plan that should henceforth put her in close communion and sympathy with mission work — not exactly the plans of operation, except that kid gloves and peanuts took stern places in the background, but this was simply the foundation for a resolute system of education, carried all through her future life.

What a pity it seems sometimes that people can not read the hearts and watch the springs of

action of those around them. If Mrs. Miller, as she closed her paper and moved away from the platform, could have seen the earnest purpose glowing and throbbing in Flossy's heart, and have known that it was born of words of hers, what a glad and thankful heart would she have carried back to her tent!

Also, if the much troubled pastor at home could have taken peeps into the future and seen what Flossy Shipley's resolves would do for *Missions*, how glad he would have been!

Perhaps it would be better to lay all the troubles and the tangles down in the Hand that overrules it all, and say, in peace and restfulness, "He knoweth the end from the beginning.'

CHAPTER XIII.

"CROSS PURPOSES."

WHEN people start out with the express design of having a good time, irrespective of other people's plans or feelings — in short, with a general forgetfulness of the existence of others — they are very likely to find at the close of the day that a failure has been made.

It did not take the entire day to convince Eurie Mitchell that Chautauqua was not the synonym for absolute, unalloyed *pleasure*. You will remember that she detached herself from her party in the early morning, and set out to find pleasure, or, as she phrased it, "fun." She imagined them to be interchangeable terms. She had not meant to be deserted, but had hoped to

secure Ruth for her companion, she not having the excuse of wishing to report the meetings to call her to them. Failing in her, in case she should have a fit of obstinacy, and choose to attend the meetings, Eurie counted fully upon Flossy as an ally. Much to her surprise, and no little to her chagrin, Flossy proved decidedly the more determined of the two. No amount of coaxing — and Eurie even descended to the employment of that weapon — had the least effect. To be sure, Flossy presented no more powerful argument than that it did not look well to come to the meeting and then not attend it. But she carried her point and left the young searcher for fun with a clear field.

Now fun rarely comes for the searching; it is more likely to spring upon one unawares. So, though Eurie walked up and down, and stared about her, and lost herself in the labyrinths of the intersecting paths, and tore her dress in a thicket, and caught her foot in a bog, to the great detriment of shoe and temper, she still found not what she was searching for. Several times she came in sight of the stand; once or twice in sound of the speaker's voice; but hav-

ng so determinately carried her point in the morning, she did not choose to abandon her position and appear among the listeners, though sorely tempted to do so. She wandered into several side tents in hope of finding something to distract her attention; but she only found that which provoked her.

In one of them a young lady and gentleman were bending eagerly over a book and talking earnestly. They were interesting looking people, and she hovered near, hoping that she had at last found the "children" who would "play" with her — a remembrance of one of her nursery stories coming to her just then, and a ludicrous sense of her resemblance to the truant boy who spent the long, bright day in the woods searching for one not too busy to play.

But these two were discussing nothing of more importance than the lesson for the coming Sabbath; and though she hovered in their vicinity for some time, she caught only stray words — names of places in the far away Judean land, that seemed to her like a name in the Arabian Nights; or an eager dissertation on the different views of eminent commentators on this or that

knotty point; and so engrossed were they in their work that they bestowed on her only the slightest passing glance, and then bent over their books.

She went away in disgust. At the next tent half a dozen ladies were sitting. She halted there. Here at last were some people who, like herself, were bored with this everlasting meeting, and had escaped to have a bit of gossip. Who knew but she might creep into the circle and find pleasant acquaintances? So she drew nearer and listened a moment to catch the subject under discussion. She heard the voice of prayer; and a nearer peep showed her that every head was bowed on the seat in front, and one of the ladies, in a low voice, was asking for enlightenment *on the lesson for the coming Sabbath!*

"What wonderful lesson can it be that is so fearfully important?" she muttered, as she plunged recklessly into the mud and made her way in all haste up the hill without attempting any more tents. "Who ever heard such an ado made about a Sunday-school lesson? These people all act as though there was nothing of any

consequence anywhere but Sunday-schools. I guess it is the first time that such a *furor* was ever gotten up over teaching a dozen verses to a parcel of children. I wonder if the people at home ever make such a uproar about the lesson? I know some teachers who own up, on the way to church, that they don't know where the lesson is. This must be a peculiar one. I wonder how I shall contrive to discover where it is? The girls won't know, of course. With all their boasted going to meeting they know no more about lessons than I do myself. I would really like to find out. I mean to ask the next person I meet. It will be in accordance with the fashion of the place. Think of my walking down Broadway of a sunny morning and stopping a stranger with the query, 'Will you tell me where the lesson is, please?'" And at this point Eurie burst into a laugh over the absurdity of the picture she had conjured.

"But this is not Broadway," she said a moment afterward, "and I mean to try it. Here comes a man who looks as if he ought to know everything. I wonder who he is? I've seen his face a dozen times since I have been here. He

led the singing yesterday. Perhaps he knows nothing but sing. They are not apt to; but his face looks as though he might have a few other ideas. Anyway, I'll try him, and if he knows nothing about it, he will go away with a confused impression that I am a very virtuous young lady, and that he ought to have known all about it; and who knows what good seed may be sown by my own wicked hand?"

Whereupon she halted before the gentleman who was going with rapid strides down the hill, and said, in her clearest and most respectful tone:

"Will you be so kind as to tell me where the lesson for next Sabbath commences? I have forgotten just where it is."

There was no hesitation, no query in his face as to what she was talking about, or uncertainty as to the answer.

"It is the fifth chapter, from the fifth to the fifteenth verse,' he said, glibly. "All fives, you see. Easy to remember. It is a grand lesson. Hard to teach, though, because it is all there Are you a teacher for next Sunday? You must come to the teachers' meeting to-morrow morn

ing; you will get good help there. Glorious meeting, isn't it? I'm so glad you are enjoying it." And away he went.

Every trace of ill-humor had vanished from Eurie's face. Instead, it was twinkling with laughter.

"The fifth chapter and fifteenth verse" of what? Certainly she had no more idea than the birds had who twittered above her head. How entirely certain he had been that of course she knew the general locality of the lesson. *She* a teacher and coming to the teachers' meeting for enlightenment as to how to teach the lesson!

"I wonder who he is?" she said again, as these thoughts flashed through her brain, and, following out the next impulse that came to her, she stopped an old gentleman who was walking leisurely down, and said, as she pointed out her late informant:

"What is that man's name, please? I can't recall it."

"That," said the old gentleman, "is Prof. Sherwin, of Newark. Have you heard him sing?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is worth hearing; and have you heard him talk?"

"No."

"Well, he can talk; you will hear him, and enjoy it, too; see if you don't. But I'll tell you what it is, young lady, to know him thoroughly you ought to hear him pray! There is the real power in a man. Let me know how a man can pray and I'll risk his talking."

Eurie had got much more information now than she had asked for. She ventured on no more questions, but made all haste to her tent, where, seated upon a corner of the bed, one foot tucked under her while the unfortunate shoe tried to dry, she sewed industriously on the zig-zag tear in her dress, and tried to imagine what she could do next. Certainly they had long days at Chautauqua. "I shall go to meeting this afternoon," she said, resolutely, "if they have three sermons, each an hour long; and what is more, I shall find out where that Sunday-school lesson is."

The next thing she did was to write a letter to her brother Nellis, a dashing boy two years her senior and her favorite companion in her

search for pleasure. Here is a copy of the letter:

"DEAR NEL: I wish you were here. Chautauqua isn't so funny as it might be. There are some things that are done here continually. In the first place, it rains. Why, you never saw anything like it! It just can't help it. The sun puts on a bland face and looks glowing intentions, and while you are congratulating your next neighbor on the prospect, she is engaged in clutching frantically after her umbrella to save her hat from the first drops of the new shower. Next, they have meetings, and there is literally no postponement on account of the weather. It is really funny to see the way in which the people rush when the bell rings, rain or shine. Nel, only think of Flossy Shipley going in the rain to hear a man preach of the "Influence of the Press," or something of that sort! It was good though, worth hearing. I went myself, because, of course, one must do something, and the frantic fashion of the place is to go to meeting. At the same time I don't understand Flossy: she is different from what she

ever was at home. I suppose it is the force of the many shining examples all around her. You know she always was a good little sheep about following somebody's lead.

"Marion is reporting, and has to be industrious. She is queer, Nel; she professes infidelity, you know; and you have no idea how mad she gets over anything that seems to be casting reproach on Christianity (unless indeed she says it herself, which is often enough, but then she seems to think it is all right).

"Ruth keeps on the even tenor of her way. It would take an earthquake to move that girl.

"I have had the greatest fun this morning. I have been mistaken for a Sabbath-school teacher who had the misfortune to forget at what verse her lesson commenced! You see I was cultivating new acquaintances, and a Prof. Sherwin gave me good advice. That and some other things aroused my curiosity concerning that same lesson, and I am going to find out where it is.

"Did you know that Sunday-school lessons were such remarkable affairs? The one for next Sunday must comprise the most wonderful

portion of Scripture that there is, for hundreds of people on these grounds are talking about it, and I stumbled upon a party of ladies this morning who were actually praying over it!

"Another thing I overheard this morning, which is news to me, that all the world was at work on the same lesson. That is rather fascinating, isn't it, to think of so many hundreds and thousands of people all pitching into the same verses on Sunday morning? It is quite sentimental, too, or capable of being made so, for instance, by a great stretch of your imagination. Suppose you and me to be very dear friends, separated by miles of ocean we will say, and both devoted Sabbath-school teachers, isn't that a stretch now? Such being the astonishing case, wouldn't it be pleasant to be at work on the same lesson? Don't you see? Lets play do it. You look up the lesson for next Sabbath and so will I. Won't that have all the charm of novelty? Then give me the benefit of your ideas acquired on that important subject, and I'll do the same to you. Really, the more I think of it the more the plan delights me. I wonder how you will carry it out? Shall you go to

Sunday-school? What will the dear Doctor say if he sees you walk into his Bible-class? I really wish I were there to enjoy the sensation. Meantime I'm going to look up an altogether wonderful teacher for myself, and then for comparing notes. My spirits begin to rise, they have been rather damp all the morning, but I see fun in the distance.

"We are to have a sensation this afternoon in the shape of a troupe of singers called the Tennesseeans — negroes, you know, and they are to give slave-cabin songs and the like. I expect to enjoy it thoroughly, but you ought to see Ruth curl her aristocratic nose at the thought.

"'Such a vulgar idea! and altogether inappropriate to the occasion. She likes to see things in keeping. If it is a religious gathering let them keep it such, and not introduce negro minstrels for the sake of calling a low crowd together, and making a little more money.'

"Marion, too, shoots arrows from her sharp tongue at it, but she rather enjoys the idea, just as she does every other thing that she chooses to call inconsistent when she happens to be the one to discover it; but woe to the one who comments on it further than she chooses to go

"Flossy and I now look with utmost toleration on the dark element that is to be introduced. I tell Ruth that I am really grateful to the authorities for introducing something that a person of my limited capacities can appreciate, and Flossy, with her sweet little charitable voice, has "no doubt they will choose proper things to sing." That little mouse is really more agreeable than she ever was in her life; and I am amazed at it, too. I expected the dear baby would make us all uncomfortable with her finified whims; but don't you think it is our lofty Ruth who is decidedly the most disagreeable of our party, save and except myself!"

This interesting epistle was brought to a sudden close by an interruption. A gentleman came with rapid steps, and halted before her tent door, which was tied hospitably back.

"I beg pardon," he said, speaking rapidly, "but this is Miss Rider?"

"It is not," Eurie answered, with promptness at which information he looked surprised and bewildered.

"Isn't this her tent? I am sorry to trouble

you, but I have been sent in haste for her. She is wanted for a consultation, and I was told I would find her here. Perhaps I might leave a message with you for her?"

"It certainly isn't her tent," Eurie said, trying to keep down the desire to laugh, "and I haven't the least idea where she is. I should be glad to give her your message if I could, but I never saw the lady in my life, and have no reason to expect that pleasure."

Whereupon her questioner laughed outright. "That is a dilemma," he said. "I appreciate your feelings, for I am precisely in the same position; but the lady was described minutely to me, and I certainly thought I had found her. I am sorry to have interrupted you," and he bowed himself away.

A new curiosity seized upon Eurie — the desire to see Miss Rider. "She must be one of them," she soliloquized, falling into Flossy's way of speaking of the workers at Chautauqua. "He said she was wanted for a consultation. I wonder if she can be one of those who are to take part in the primary exercises? She must be young for such prominent work if she looks like

me; but how could he know that since he never saw her? It is very evident that I am to go to Sunday-school next Sabbath anyhow, if I never did before, for now I have two items of interest to look up — a lesson that is in the 'fifth chapter, from the fifth to the fifteenth verse of *something*.' and a being called 'Miss Rider.'" So thinking she hastily concluded and folded her letter, ready for the afternoon mail, without a thought or care as to the seed that she had been sending away in it, or as to the fruit it might bear; without the slightest insight into the way she was being led through seeming mistakes and accidents up to a point that was to influence all her future.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NEW LESSON.

URIE turned her pillow, thumped the scant feathers into little heaps, and gave a dismal groan as she laid her head back on it.

"It is very queer," she said, "that as soon as ever I make up my mind to be orthodox, and go to meeting every time the bell rings, I should be dumped into a heap on this hard bed with the headache. I haven't had a touch of it before."

"'The way of transgressors is hard,'" quoted Marion, going on calmly with her writing. "If you hadn't taken that horrid tramp yesterday instead of going to meeting like a Christian, you would have been all right to-day."

"I believe you sit up nights to read your Bi-

ble, so as to have verses to fling at people who are overtaken in any possible trial or inconvenience. You always have them ready. Didn't you bring it with you, and don't you prepare a list for each day's use?" This was Eurie's half merry, half petulant reply to the Bible verse that had been "flung" at her.

Marion carefully erased a word that seemed to her fastidious taste too inexpressive before she answered:

"I don't own such an article as a Bible, my child; so your suspicions are entirely unfounded. My early education was not defective in that respect, however, and I confess that I find many verses that seem to very aptly describe the ways of sinful mortals like yourself."

Eurie raised herself on one elbow, regardless of headache and the cloth wet in vinegar that straightway fell off.

"You don't own a Bible!" she said, in utter surprise, and with a touch of actual dismay in her voice.

"I am depraved to that degree, my dear little saint. I conclude that you are more devoutly inclined, and have one of your own. Pray how many chapters a day do you read in it?"

Eurie lay down again, and Flossy came with the vinegar cloth and bound it securely on her forehead.

"I don't read in it very often, to be sure," Eurie murmured. "In fact I suppose I may as well say that I never do. But then I own one, and always have. I am not a heathen; and really and truly it seems almost queer not to have a Bible of one's own. It is a sort of mark of civilization, you know."

Marion laughed good-naturedly.

"I never make a great deal of pretense in that line," she said, gayly. "As for being a heathen, that is only a relative term. According to Dr. Calkins, they were more or less in advance of us. I am one of the 'advanced' sort. Ruth, your toilet ought to be nearly completed; I hear that indefatigable bell."

"You are very foolish not to go this morning and let your writing wait. We shall be certain to have something worth listening to; it is a strange time to select for absence." This was Ruth's quiet answer, as she pinned her lace ruffle with a gleaming little diamond.

"'Diligent in business.' There is another

verse for you, my heathen," Marion said, with a merry glance toward Eurie. "When you get home and get the dust of years swept off from your Bible, you take a look at it, and see if I have not quoted correctly. And a good, sensible verse it is. I have found it the only way in which to keep my head above water. Ruthie, the trouble is not with me, it lies with those selfish and obstinate newspaper men. If they would have the sense to let their papers wait over another day I could go to the lecture this morning. As it is, I am a victim to their indifference. If I miss a blessing the sin will be at *their* door, not mine."

Eurie opened her heavy eyes and looked at Flossy.

"Come," she said, "don't stand there mopping me in vinegar any longer. Are you ready? I am really disappointed. I've always wanted to hear that man. I want to tell Nel about him."

Flossy washed her hands, shook back the yellow curls with an indifferent and preoccupied air, and went to the door to wait for Ruth. She had taken no part in the war of words that

had been passing between Marion and Eurie, but she had heard. And like almost everything else that she heard during these days, it had awakened a new thought and desire. Flossy was growing amazed at herself. It seemed to her that she must have spent her seventeen years of life taking long naps, and this Chautauqua was a stiff breeze from the ocean that was going to shake her awake. The special thought that had dashed itself at her this morning was that she, too, had no Bible. Not that she did not own one, elegantly done in velvet and clasped in gold, so effectually clasped that it had been sealed to her all her life. She positively had no recollection of having ever sat down deliberately to read the Bible. She had "looked over" occasionally in school, but even this service of her eyes had been fitful and indifferent; and as for her head paying any sort of attention to the reading, it might as well have been done in Greek instead of French, which language she but dimly comprehended even when she tried. But now she ought to have a Bible. She ought not to wait for that velvet covered one. A whole week in which to find

what some of her orders were, and no way in which to find them. Of course she could buy one, but how queer it would seem to be going to the museum to make a purchase of a Bible! "They will wonder why I did not bring my own," she murmured, with that life-long deference that she had educated herself to pay to the "they" who composed her world. And in another instance the new-born feeling of respect and independence asserted itself. "I can't help that," she said, positively, shaking her curls with a determined air; "and it really makes no difference what anybody thinks. Of course I must have a Bible, and I only wish I had it for this morning, I shall certainly get one the first opportunity." Then she turned and said "good-morning" to the pretty little lady who occupied the tent next door, and between whom and herself a pleasant acquaintance was springing up.

"Are you going to the lecture?" Flossy, asked and the small lady shook her head, with a wistful air.

"Dear me, no! My young tyrant wouldn't consent to that. I meant to take him down with me and try him, but he has gone to sleep;

and it is just as well, for he would have been certain to want to do all the talking. He has no idea that there is any one in the country who knows quite as much as he does." It was said in a half complaining tone, but underneath it was the foundation of tender pride, that showed her to be the vain mother of the handsome tyrant. Still it seemed to be Flossy's duty to condole with her.

"You miss most of the meetings, do you not?"

"Three-fourths of them. You see it is inconvenient to have a husband who is reporter for the press, and who *must* be there to hear. It is only when he must write up his notes for publication that I can get a chance; and even then, unless it is baby's sleepy time, it does me no good. I am especially sorry this morning, for Dr. Cuyler used to be my pastor. He married me one summer morning just like this, and I haven't laid eyes on him since. I should like to hear his voice again, but it can't be done."

Now who would have imagined that, with all the powers that were bestirring themselves to come to Flossy's education, it would have been

a rosy, crowing baby, in the unconsciousness of a morning nap, that should have given her her first lesson in unselfishness? Yet he was the very one. It flashed over Flossy in an instant from some source. Who was so likely to have suggested it as the sweet angel who hovered over the sleeping darling?

"Oh, Mrs. Adams, let me stay with baby, and you go to hear Cuyler. It is a real pity that you should miss him, when he is associated with your life in this way. I never saw him, and though, of course, I should like to, yet I presume there will be opportunities enough. I will be as careful of baby as if he were my grandson; and if he wakens I will charm him out of his wits, so that it will never occur to him to cry."

Of course there was demurring, and profuse expressions of thanks and declinatures all in a breath. But Flossy was so winning, so eager, so thoroughly in earnest; and the little Mrs. Adams did so love her old pastor, and did feel so anxious to see him again, that in a very short time she was beguiled into going in all haste to her tent to make a "go-to-meeting" toilet; and a blessed thing it was that that sentence does not

mean at Chautauqua what it does in Buffalo, or Albany, or a few other places, else Dr. Cuyler might have slipped from them before the necessary articles were all in array. It involved simply the twitching off of a white apron, the settling of a pretty sun hat — for the sun actually shone! — and the seizure of a waterproof, needed, if she found a seat, to protect her from the damp boards — needed in any case, because in five minutes it might rain — and she was ready.

Ruth came to the door.

"Come, Flossy," she said; "where in the world are you? We shall be late." And said it precisely as though she had been waiting for that young person for half an hour.

Flossy emerged from the adjoining tent.

"I am not going." she said. "I have turned nurse-girl, and have the sweetest little baby in here that ever grew. Mrs. Adams is going in my place. Mrs. Adams, Miss Erskine."

And as those two ladies walked away together Mrs. Adams might have been heard to say:

"What a lovely, unselfish disposition your friend has! It was so beautiful in her to take me so by storm this morning! I am afraid I was

very selfish; which is apt to be the case, I think, when one comes in contact with actual unselfishness. It is one of the Christian graces that is very hard to cultivate, anyway; don't you think so?"

Ruth was silent; not from discourtesy, but from astonishment. It was such a strange experience to hear any one speak of Flossy Shipley as "unselfish." In truth she had grown up under influences that had combined to foster the most complete and tyrannical selfishness — exercised in a pretty, winning sort of way, but rooted and grounded in her very life. So indeed was Ruth's; but *she*, of course, did not know that, though she had clear vision for the mote in Flossy's eyes.

Meantime Marion had staid her busy pen and was biting the end of it thoughtfully. The two tents were such near neighbors that the latter conversation and introduction had been distinctly heard. She glanced around to the girl on the bed.

"Eurie," she said, "are you asleep, or are *you* enjoying Flossy's last new departure?"

Eurie giggled.

"I heard," she said. "The lazy little mouse has slipped out of a tedious hour, and has a chance to lounge and read a pleasant novel. I dare say the mother is provided with them."

Then Marion, after another thoughtful pause:

"But, my child, how do you account for the necessity of going to the neighbors and taking the supervision of a baby in order to do that? Flossy need not have gone to church if she didn't choose."

"Yes she need. Don't you suppose the child can see that it is the fashion of the place? She is afraid that it wouldn't look well to stay in the tent and lounge, without an excuse for doing so. If that girl could only go to a place where it was the fashion for all the people to be good, she would be a saint, just because 'they' were."

"She would have to go to heaven," muttered Marion, going on with her writing.

"And, according to you, there *is* no such place; so there is no hope for her, after all. Oh, dear! I wonder if you are right, and nothing is of any consequence, anyhow?" And the weary girl turned on her pillow and tried not to think, an effort that was hard to accomplish after a week's experience at Chautauqua.

Flossy sat herself down beside the sleeping darling, and cast about her for something to amuse or interest, her eyes brightening into beauty as she recognized a worn and torn copy of the Bible. Eurie would have been surprised to see the eagerness with which she seized upon the book that was to afford her entertainment. She turned the leaves tenderly, with a new sense of possession about her. This Bible was a copy of letters that had been written to her — words spoken, many of them, by Jesus himself. Strange that she had so little idea what they were! Marion, with her boasted infidel notions, knew much more about "The Book" than Flossy with her nominal Christian education and belief. She had no idea where to turn or what to look for to help her. Yet she turned the leaves slowly, with a delicious sense of having found a prize a — book of instructions, a guide book for her on this journey that she was just beginning to realize that she was taking. *Somewhere* within it she would find light and help. The book was one that had been much used, and had a fashion of opening of itself at certain places that might have been favorites

with the little mother. At one of those places Flossy halted and read: "'After this there was a feast of the Jews.' After what, I wonder?" she said within herself. She knew nothing about it. "Never mind, I will see pretty soon. This is about a feast where Jesus was. And Jesus went up to Jerusalem." Oh, how nice to have been there, wherever that was." The ignorant little thing had not the least idea where Jerusalem was, except that it was in that far away, misty Holy Land, that had seemed as vague and indefinite to her as the grave or as heaven. But there came suddenly to her heart a certain blessed analogy.

"If I were going to write an account of my recent experiences to some dear friend that I wanted to tell it to," she said, talking still to herself, or to the sleeping baby, "I would write it something like this: 'After this'— That would mean; let me see what it *would* mean. Why, after that party at home, when I danced all night and was sick. 'After this there was a feast of the Christian people at Chautauqua, and Jesus went there.' I could certainly write that, for I have seen him and heard him speak in my very heart." Then she went on, through the

second verse to the third. "'In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water,'" and here a great swell of tears literally blinded her eyes. It came to her so suddenly, so forcibly. The great multitude here at Chautauqua—blind. Yes, some of them. Was not she? How many more might there be? Many of whom she knew, others that she did not know, but that Jesus did. Waiting without knowing that they were waiting. With tears and smiles, and with a new great happiness throbbing at her heart, she read through the sweet, simple, wonderful story; how the poor man met Jesus; how he questioned; how the man complained; and how Jesus was greater than his infirmity. Through the whole of it, until suddenly she closed the book, her tears dried, and a solemn, wondering, almost awe-struck look on her face. She had got her lesson, her directions, her example. She could bear no more, even of the Bible, just then. She said it over, that startling verse that came to her with a whole volume of suggestion: "'*And the man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.*'"

CHAPTER XV.

GREAT MEN.

RUTH ERSKINE, with her skirts gathered daintily around her, to avoid contact with the unclean earth, made her way skillfully through the crowd, and with the aid of a determined spirit and a camp-chair secured a place and a seat very near the stand. The little lady who timidly followed in her lead was not quite so fortunate, inasmuch as she had no camp-chair, and was less resolved in her determination to get ahead of those who had arrived earlier; so she contented herself with a damp seat on the end of a board, which was vacated for her use by a courteous gentleman.

Ruth, you must understand, was not selfish in

this matter because she had planned to be, but simply because it had never occurred to her to be otherwise, which is one of the misfortunes that come to people who are educated in a selfish atmosphere. Ruth Erskine had come to this meeting fully prepared to enjoy it. Dr. Cuyler was a star of sufficient magnitude to attract her. During her frequent visits to New York she had heard much of but had never seen him. The people whom she visited were too elegant in their views and practices to have much in common with the church which was so pronounced on the two great questions of religion and temperance. Yet, even with them, Dr. Cuyler and Dr. Cuyler's great church were eccentricities to be tolerated, not ignored. Therefore Ruth had had it in her heart to enjoy listening to him sometime. The sometime had arrived. She had dressed herself with unusual care, a ceremony which seemed to be quite in the background among the people who were at home at Chautauqua. But someway it seemed to Ruth that the great Brooklyn pastor should receive this mark of respect at her hands; so she had spent the morning at her toilet and was now a fashionable lady, fashionably attired for church.

If the people who vouchsafed her a glance as she crowded past indulged, some of them, in a smile at her expense, and thought the simple temple made of trees and grasses an inappropriate surrounding to her silken robes and costly lace mantle, she was none the wiser for that, you know, and took her seat, indifferent to them all, except that presently there stole over her the sense of disagreeable incongruity with her outdoor surroundings; so Satan had the pleasure of ruffling her spirits and occupying her thoughts with her rich brown silk dress instead of letting her heart be touched with the solemnity and beauty of the grand hymn which rolled down those long aisles. Satan has that everlasting weapon, "What to wear, and what not to wear," everlastingly at command and wonderfully under his control. But Ruth, in her way, was strong-minded and could control her thoughts when she chose; so she presently shook off the feeling of annoyance and decided to give herself up to the influences of the hour.

By this time Dr. Cuyler appeared and was introduced. Ruth gave him the benefit of a very searching gaze, and decided that he was the very

last man of all those on the platform whom she would have selected as the speaker. Probably if Dr. Cuyler had known this, and known also that his personal presence entirely disappointed her, he would not have been greatly disconcerted thereby. But his subject was one that found an answering thrill in this young lady's heart — "Some Talks I Have Had With Great Men." Ruth liked greatness. In her calm, composed way she bowed before it. She would have enjoyed being great. Celebrity in a majestic, dignified form would have been her delight. She by no means admitted this, as Eurie Mitchell so often did. She by no means sought after it in the small ways within her reach. Small ways did not suit her; they disgusted her. But if she could have flashed into splendid greatness, if by any amount of laborious study, or work, or suffering, she could have seen the way to world-wide renown she would have grasped for it in an instant.

The next best thing to being renowned one's self was to have renowned people for friends. This was another thing that Ruth coveted in silence. She wanted no one to know how ear-

nestly she aspired to, *sometime*, making the acquaintance of some of the great people not — the vulgarly great, those who were in a sense, and in the eyes of a few, great because of the accidents of fortune and travel. She knew such by the scores. Indeed, she had been in circles many a time where *she* shone with that sort of greatness herself. Perhaps it was for that reason that it was such a despised height to her. But she meant the *really* great people of this world — people of power, people who moved the masses by the force of their brains. Not one such had she ever met to look upon as an acquaintance; and here was this man telling off the honored names by the score, and saying, "My friend, Dr. Guthrie" — "My good friend, Thomas Carlyle" — My dear brother, Newman Hall." How would it seem to stand in intimate relationship with one single gifted mind like these, and was she destined ever to know by actual experience?

There was another reason why Ruth had desired to choose Dr. Cuyler to listen to rather than some other names on the programme, because, from the nature of his subject she had

judged it most unlikely that he should have about him any arrows that would touch home to her. Not that she put it in that language; she did not admit even to herself that any of the solemn words that had been spoken at Chautauqua had reference to her; and yet in a vague, fitful way she was ill at ease.

She had moments of feeling that there was a reach of happiness possessed by these people of which she knew nothing. Little side thrusts had come to her from time to time in places where she least expected them. That question, asked by Flossy during her night of unrest, "Should you be afraid to die?" hovered around this quietly poised young lady in a most unaccountable manner. All the more persistently did it cling because she could not shake it off with the thought that it was silly. Common sense told her that the strange, solemn shadow, which came so steadily after men, and so surely enveloped one after another among the grandest intellects that the world owned, was not a thing to pass over lightly.

After all, why should she *not* be afraid of death? Then that strange gentleman who had

persisted in ranking her among the praying people! he had left his shadow. Why did she not pray? She wondered over this in a vague sort of way; wondered how it seemed to kneel down alone, and speak to an invisible presence; wondered if those who so knelt always felt as though they were really speaking to God.

There were times when Ruth was exceedingly disgusted with these perplexing thoughts, and wanted nothing so much as to get away from them. She resented this intrusion upon her quiet. This day was one of those in which she was impatient of all these things, and she had made her toilet with great satisfaction, and said within herself complacently: "We are to have *one* hour at last devoted to this mundane sphere and the mortals who inhabit it; most of the time these Chautauquans talk and act as though earth was only a railroad station, where people changed cars and went on to heaven. Dr. Cuyler is going to refresh us with some actual living specimens of humanity. He can't make a sermon out of that subject if he tries."

But Ruth Erskine had not measured the power of the earnest preachers of Jesus Christ. As if

Dr. Cuyler could talk for an hour to thousands of immortal souls, and leave Christ and heaven and immortality out.

To Ruth these three words constituted a sermon, and she got them that day. Not that he had an idea that he was preaching Christ, except incidentally, as a man refers almost unconsciously to the one whom he loves best in all the world · but Ruth knew he was. It came in little sudden touches when she least expected it, when heart and soul were wrought upon with some strong enthusiasm by the splendid picture of a splendid man — as when he told of Spurgeon. It was a glowing description, such as thrilled Ruth, and made her feel that to have just one glimpse of that great man, with his great marvelous power over humanity, would be worth a lifetime.

Suddenly the speaker said: "The secret of that man's power lies, first, in his study of the Bible." Ruth started and came down like a bomb-shell from her wondrous height. The Bible! copies of which lay carelessly on every table of her father's elegantly furnished house, unstudied and unthought of. How very strange

to ascribe the power of the great intellect to the study of one book that was more or less familiar to every Sunday-school boy. "Second, in short, simple, homely language." Ruth smiled now. Dr. Cuyler was growing absurd, as if it were not the most common thing in the world to use simple, homely language! No Spurgeons could be manufactured in that way, she was sure. "Third, mighty earnestness to save souls." Here was a point concerning which Ruth knew nothing.

Dr. Cuyler's manner put tremendous force into the forceful words, and carried conviction with them. She wondered how a really *mighty* earnestness to save souls made a man appear? She wondered whether she had ever seen such a one; she went rapidly over the list of her acquaintances in the church. She smiled to herself a sarcastic, contemputous smile; she had met them all at parties, concerts, festivals, and the like; she had seen them on occasions when *nothing* seemed to possess them but to have a good time like the rest of the world.

Like the rest of the world, Ruth reasoned and decided from her chance meetings with the outside life of these Christians, forgetting that she

had never seen one of them in their closets before God; rather, she knew nothing about these closets, nor the experiences learned there, and could only reason from outside life. This being the case, what a pity that her verdict of those lives should have called forth only that contemptuous smile! Wandering off in this train of thought, she lost the speaker's next point, but was called back by his solemn, ringing close.

"Put these together, melt them down with the love of Christ, and you have a Spurgeon. God be thanked for such a piece of hand work as he!"

Another start and another retrospect. *Did* she know any people who put these together; who made a real, earnest, constant study of the Bible as school girls studied their Latin grammars, and who were really eager to save souls because they had the love of Christ in their hearts, and who said so in plain simple language? "Does he, I wonder?" she said to herself. "I wonder if his sermons sound like that? I should like to hear him preach just once. Oh, dear! if he isn't running off to Moody and Sankey. It *is* a sermon after all!"

On the whole, Ruth was disgusted. Her brain was in a whirl; she was being compelled to hear *sermons* on every hand. She was sick of it. They had been great men of whom she had heard, and she admired them all; she wanted the secret of their power, but she didn't want it to be made out of such commonplace material as was in the hands of every child. She did not know what she wanted — only that she had come out to be entertained and to revel in her love of heroes, and she had been pinned down to the one thought that *real* men were made of those who found their power in their Bible and on their knees.

The solemn, earnest, tender closing to this address did not lessen her sense of discomfort. Then just beside her was carried on a conversation that added to her annoyance.

"They are big men," a man said. He was dressed in a common business suit; his linen had not the exquisite freshness about it that her fastidious eyes delighted in; his hands looked as though they might have been used to work that was rough and hard; his straggling hair was sprinkled with gray, and there was not a striking feature about him.

"They are big men," he said, "and I've no doubt it is a big thing to know them, and talk with them, and have a friendly feeling for each, as if they belonged to him, but he knows a bigger one than them, and the best of it is, so do we. The Lord Jesus Christ, our Elder Brother, is not to be compared to common men like these."

And now Ruth's lips curled utterly. She was an aristocrat without knowing it. She believed in Christianity, and in its power to save the poor and the commonest, but this insufferable assumption of dignity and superiority over the rest of the world, as she called it, was hateful to her in the extreme. It would have startled her exceedingly to have been told that she was angry with the man for presuming to place *his* Friend higher in the list of great ones than any of those given that day; and yet such was actually her feeling. She swept her skirts angrily away from contact with the man, and spoke so crustily to the little lady who had come in her wake that she moved timidly away.

Just at her left were two gentlemen shaking hands. Both had been on the stand together

she knew the faces of both, and *one* ranked just a trifle higher in her estimation than any one at Chautauqua. She edged a little nearer. She lived in the hope of making the acquaintance of some of these lights, just enough acquaintance to receive a bow and a clasp of the hand, though how one could accomplish it who was determined that her interest in them should neither be seen nor suspected, it would be hard to say; but they were talking in eager, hearty tones, not at all as if their words were confidential — at least she might have the benefit of them.

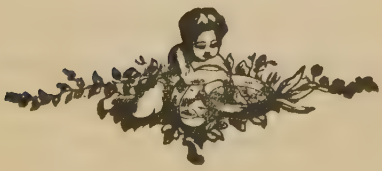
"That was a capital lecture," the elder of the two was saying. "Cuyler has had great advantages in his life in meeting on a familiar footing so many of our great men. When you get thinking of these things, and of the many men whom you would like to know intimately, what is the thought that strikes you most forcibly?"

"That I am glad I belong to the 'royal family,' and have the opportunity of knowing intimately and holding close personal relations with Him who 'spake as never man spake.'"

The other answered in a rare, rich tone of suppressed jubilance of feeling.

"Exactly!" his friend said; "and when you can leave the fullness of that thought long enough tc take another, there is the looking forward to actual fellowship and communion not only with him, but with all these glorious men who are living here, and who have gone up yonder."

Ruth turned abruptly away. The very thought that possessed the heart of the plain-looking man and that so annoyed her; and these two, whom to know was an honor, were looking forward to that consummation as the height of it all!



CHAPTER XVI.

A WAR OF WORDS.

"WELL, why not?" she said, as she went slowly down the aisle. Of course all these people would be in heaven together, and why should they not look forward to a companionship untrameled by earthly forms and conventionalities, and uncumbered by the body in its present dull and ponderous state? What a chance to get into the best society! the highest circle! real best, too, not made up of money, or blood, or dress, or any of the flimsy and silly barriers that fenced people in and out now. Then at once she felt her own inconsistency in growing disgusted with the plainly-dressed, common-looking man. If he did really belong to that "royal family," why not rejoice

over it? Wasn't *she* the foolish one? She by no means liked these reflections, but she could not get away from them.

"How do you do?" said a clear, round voice behind her; not speaking to her, but to some one whom he was very glad to see, judging from his tone. And the voice was peculiar; she had been listening to it for an hour, and could not be mistaken; it belonged to Dr. Cuyler himself. She turned herself suddenly. Here was a chance for a nearer view, and to see who was being greeted so heartily. It was the little lady whose society had been thrust upon her that morning by Flossy. And they were shaking hands as though they were old and familiar acquaintances!

"It is good to see your face again," that same hearty voice which seemed to have so much good fellowship in it was saying. "I didn't know you were to be here; I'm real glad to see you again, and what about the husband and the dear boy?"

At which point it occurred to Miss Ruth Erskine that she was listening to conversation not designed for her ears. She moved away sud-

denly, in no way comforted or sweetened as to her temper by this episode. Why should that little bit of an insignificant woman have the honor of such a cordial greeting from the great man, while he did not even know of *her* existence?

To be sure, Dr. Cuyler had baptized and received into church fellowship and united in marriage the little woman with whom he was talking; but Ruth, even if she had known these circumstances, was in no mood to attach much importance to them.

She wandered away from the crowd down by the lake-side. She stopped at Jerusalem on her way, and poked her parasol listlessly into the sand of which the hills lying about that city were composed, and thought:

"What silly child's play all this was! How absurd to suppose that people were going to get new ideas by *playing* at cities with bits of painted board and piles of sand! Even if they *could* get a more distinct notion of its surroundings, what difference did it make how Jerusalem looked, or where it stood, or what had become of the buildings?"

This last, as it began dimly to dawn upon her, that it was useless to deny the fact that even such listless and disdainful staring as she had vouchsafed to this make-believe city had located it, as it had not been located before, in her brain.

When she produced the flimsy question, "What difference does it make?" you can see at once the absurd mood that had gotten possession of her, and you lose all your desire to argue with any one who feels as foolish as that. Neither had Ruth any desire to argue with herself; she was disgusted with her mind for insisting on keeping her up to a strain of thought.

"A lovely place to rest!" she said, aloud, and indignantly, giving a more emphatic poke with her parasol, and quite dislodging one of the buildings in Jerusalem. "One's brain is just kept at high pressure all the time."

Now, why this young lady's brain should have been in need of rest she did not take the trouble to explain, even to herself. She sat herself down presently under one of the trees by the lake-side and gave herself up to plans. She was tired of Chautauqua; of that she was certain.

It stirred her up, and the process was uncomfortable. Her former composed life suited her taste better. She must get away. There was no earthly reason why she should not go at once to Saratoga. A host of friends were already there, and certain other friends would be only too glad to follow as soon as ever they heard of her advent in that region. Before she left that rustic settee under the trees she had the programme all arranged.

"We will get through to-morrow as we best can," she said, sighing over the thought that to-morrow being the Sabbath would perforce be spent there, "and then on Monday morning Flossy and I will just run away to Saratoga and leave those two absurd girls to finish their absurd scheme in the best way they can."

And having disposed of Flossy as though she were a bit of fashionable merchandise without any volition of her own, Ruth felt more composed and went at once to dinner.

There came an astonishing interference to this planning, from no other than Flossy herself. To the utter amazement of each of the girls, she quietly refused to be taken to Saratoga; nor did

she offer any other excuse for this astonishing piece of self-assertion than that she was having a good time and meant to finish it. And to this she adhered with a pertinacity that was very bewildering, because it was so very new. Marion laughed over her writing, to which she had returned the moment dinner was concluded.

"That is right, Flossy," she said, "I'm glad to see Chautauqua is having an effect of some sort on one of us. You are growing strong-minded; mind isn't a bad thing to have; keep to yours. Ruth, I am astonished at *you;* I shall have to confess that you are disappointing me, my child. Now, I rather expected this dear little bit of lace and velvet to give up, conquered, in less than a week, but I said to myself, 'Ruth Erskine has pluck enough to carry her through a *month* of camp-life,' and here you are quenched at the end of four days."

"It isn't the camp-life," Ruth said, irritably. "I am not so much a baby as to care about those things to such a degree that I can't endure them, though everything is disagreeable enough; but that isn't the point at all."

Marion turned and looked at her curiously.

"What on earth *is* the point then? What has happened to so disgust you with Chautauqua?"

"The point is, that I am tired of it all. It is unutterably stupid! I suppose I have a right to be tired of a silly scheme that ought never to have been undertaken, if I choose to be, have I not, without being called in question by any one?"

And feeling more thoroughly vexed, not only with the girls, but with herself, than ever she remembered feeling before, Ruth arose suddenly and sought refuge under the trees outside the tent.

Marion maintained a puzzled silence. This was a new phase in Ruth's character, and one hard to manage.

Flossy looked on the point of crying. She was not used to crossing the wills of those who had influence over her, but she was very determined as to one thing: she was not going to leave Chautauqua.

"Nothing could tempt me to go to Saratoga just now," she said, earnestly.

"Why?" asked Marion, and receiving no

answer at all felt that Flossy puzzled her as much as Ruth had done. However, she set herself to work to restore peace.

"This letter is done," she said, gayly, folding her manuscript. "It is a perfectly gushing account of yesterday's meeting, for some of which I am indebted to the Buffalo reporters; for I have given the most thrilling parts where I wasn't present. Now I'm going to celebrate. Come in, Ruth, we are of the same mind precisely. I would gladly accompany you on the afternoon train to Saratoga with the greatest pleasure, were it not for certain inconveniences connected with my pocket-book, and a desire to replenish it by writing up this enterprise. But since we can't go to Saratoga, let's you and I go to Mayville. It is a city of several hundred inhabitants, six or eight, certainly, I should think; and we can have an immense amount of fun out of the people and the sights this afternoon, and escape the preaching. I haven't got to write another letter until Monday. Come, shall we take the three o'clock boat?"

Neither of these young ladies could have told what possible object there could be in leav-

ing the lovely woods in which they were camped and going off to the singularly quiet, uninteresting little village of Mayville, except that it was, as they said, a getting away from the preaching — though why two young ladies, with first-class modern educations, should find it so important to get themselves away from some of the first speakers in the country they did not stop to explain even to themselves. However, the plan came to Ruth as a relief, and she unhesitatingly agreed to it; so they went their ways — Flossy to the afternoon meeting (since Eurie declared herself so far convalescent as to be entirely able to remain alone) and the two of the party who had prided themselves up to this time on their superiority of intellect down to the wharf to take the boat for Mayville.

The ride thither on the lovely lake was almost enough to excuse them for their folly. But the question what to do with themselves afterward was one that burdened them during all that long summer afternoon. They went to the Mayville House and took a walk on the piazza, and the boarders looked at them in curiosity, and wondered if it were really a pleasanter walk than the green fields over at Chautauqua.

They ordered dinner and ate it at the general table with great relish, Ruth rejoicing over this return to civilized life. One episode of the table must be noted. Opposite them sat a gentleman who, either from something in their appearance, or more probably from the reasonable conclusion that all the strangers who had gathered at the quiet little village were in some way associated with the great gathering, addressed them as being part of that great whole.

"You people are going to reap a fine harvest, pecuniarily, to-morrow; but how about the fourth commandment? You Christians lay great stress on that document whenever a Sunday reading-room or something of that sort is being contemplated, don't you?"

The remark was addressed to both of them, but Ruth was too much occupied with the strangeness of the thought that she was again being counted among "Christian people" to make any answer. Not so Marion. Her eyes danced with merriment, but she answered with great gravity:

"We believe in keeping holy the Sabbath day, of course. What has that to do with Chautau-

qua. Haven't you consulted the programme and read: 'No admission at the gates or docks'?"

The gentleman smiled incredulously.

"I have *read it*," he said, significantly, "and doubtless many believe it implicitly. I hope their faith won't be shaken by hearing the returns from tickets counted over in the evening."

There was a genuine flush of feeling on Marion's face now.

"Do you mean to say," she asked, haughtily, "that you have no faith in the published statement that the gates will be closed, or do you mean that the association have changed their minds? Because if you have heard the latter, I can assure you it is a mistake, as I heard the matter discussed by those in authority this very morning; and they determined to adhere rigidly to the rules."

"I have no doubt they will, so far as lies in their power," the gentleman said, with an attempt at courtesy in his manner. "But the trouble is, the thing is absurd on the face of it. If I hold a ticket for an entertainment, which

the Association have sold to me, it is none of their business on what day I present it, provided the entertainment is in progress. They have no right to keep me out, and they are swindling me out of so much money if they do it."

"You have changed your argument," Marion said, with a flash of humor in her eyes. "You were talking about the amount of money that the *Association* were to earn to-morrow, not the amount which *you* were to lose by not being allowed to come in. However, I am willing to talk from that standpoint. If you hold the *season* ticket of the Association, and are stopping outside, you will be admitted, of course. It is held to be as reasonable a way to go to church as though you harnessed your horses at home and drove, on the Sabbath, to your regular place of worship. But you buy no ticket *for* the Sabbath, and none is received from you; and if you choose not to go, the Association neither makes nor loses by the operation, and, so far as money is concerned, is entirely indifferent which you decide to do. What fault can possibly be found with such an arrangement?"

"Well," said the gentleman, with a quiet pos

itiveness of tone, "I haven't a season ticket, and I don't mean to buy one, and I mean to go down there to meeting to-morrow, and I expect to get in."

"I dare say," Marion answered, with glowing cheeks. "The grounds are extensive, you know, and they are not walled in. I haven't the least doubt but that hundreds can creep through the brush, and so have the gospel free. There is something about 'he that climbeth up some other way being a thief and a robber;' but, of course, the writer could not have had Chautauqua in mind; and even if it applies, it would be only stealing from an Association, which is not stealing at all, you know."

"You are hard on me," the gentleman said, flushing in his turn, and the listeners, of whom there were many, laughed and seemed to enjoy the flashing of words. "I have no intention of creeping or climbing in. I shall present the same sort of ticket which took me in to-day, and if it doesn't pass me I will send you a dispatch to let you know, if you will give me your address."

"And if you *do* get in, and will let me know,

I will report at once to the proper authorities that the gate-keepers have been unfaithful to their trust," said Marion, triumphantly.

"But, my dear madam, what justice is there in that? I have paid my money, and what business is it to them when I present my ticket? That is keeping me out of my just dues."

"Oh, not a bit of it; that is, if you can read, and have, as you admit, read their printed statement that you are not invited to the ground on Sunday. Your fifty-cent ticket will admit you on Monday. And you surely will not argue that the Association has not a right to limit the number of guests that it will entertain over the Sabbath?"

"Yes, I argue that it is their business to let me in whenever I present their ticket."

Marion laughed outright.

"That is marvelous!" she said. "It is wicked for them to receive payment for your coming in on the Sabbath, and it is wicked for them not to let you in on your ticket. Really, I don't see what the Association are to do. They are committing sin either way it is put. I see no way out of it but to have refused to sell you any

tickets at all. Would that have made it right?"

The laugh that was raised over this innocently put question seemed to irritate her new acquaintance. He spoke hastily.

"It is a Sabbath-breaking concern, viewed in any light that you choose to put it. There is no sense in holding camp-meetings over the Sabbath, and every one agrees that they have a demoralizing effect."

"Do you mean me to understand you to think that the several thousand people who are now stopping at Chautauqua will be breaking the Sabbath by going out of their tents to-morrow and walking down to the public service?"

The bit of sophistry in this meekly put question was overlooked, or at least not answered, and the logical young gentleman asked:

"If they think Sabbath services in the woods so helpful, why are they not consistent? Let them throw the meeting open for all who wish to come, making the gospel without money and without price, as they pretend it is. Why isn't that done?"

"Well, there are at least half a dozen reasons.

I wonder you have not thought of one of them. In the first place, that, of course, would tempt to a great deal of Sabbath traveling, a thing which they carefully guard against now by refusing to admit all travelers. And in the second place, it would give the Chautauqua people a great deal to do in the way of entertaining so large a class of people. As it is, they have quite as much as they care to do to make comfortable the large company who belong to their family. And in the third place — But perhaps you do not care to hear all the reasons?"

He ignored this question also, and went back to one of her arguments.

"They don't keep travelers away at all, even by your own admission. What is to hinder hundreds of them from coming here to-day and buying season tickets in order to get in to-morrow?"

He had the benefit of a most quizzical glance then from Marion's shining eyes before she answered.

"Oh, well, if the people are really so hungering and thirsting for the gospel, as it is dispensed at Chautauqua, that they are willing to

act a lie, by pretending that they are members *who have been and are to be in regular attendance*, and then are willing to pay two dollars and a half for the Sunday meeting, I don't know but I think they ought to be allowed to *creep* in. Don't you?"

CHAPTER XVII.

GETTING READY TO LIVE.

AMID the laughter that followed this retort the company rose up from the table and went their various ways, to meet, perhaps, again.

"How on earth do you manage to keep so thoroughly posted in regard to Chautauqua affairs? One would think you were the wife of the private secretary. *I* shouldn't have known whether the gates were to be opened or closed to-morrow."

This from Ruth as the two girls paced the long piazza while waiting for the carriage which was to take them to the boat; for, having exhausted the resources of Mayville for entertainment, they were about to return to Chautauqua.

Marion laughed.

"I'm here in the capacity of a newspaper writer, please remember," she answered promptly, "and what I don't know I can imagine, like the rest of that brilliant fraternity. I am not really positive about a great many of the statements that I made, except on the general principle that these people belong to the class who are very much given to doing according to their printed word. It says on the circulars that the gates will be closed on the Sabbath, and I dare say they will be. At least, we have a right to assume such to be the case until it is proven false."

"What class of people do you mean who are given to doing as they have agreed? Christian people, do you refer to?"

"Well, yes; the sort of Christians that one meets at such a gathering as this. As a rule, the namby-pamby Christians stay away from such places; or, if they come, they float off to Saratoga or some more kindred climate. I beg your pardon, Ruthie, that doesn't mean you, you know, because you are not one of any sort."

"Then do you take it to be their religion

which inclines you to trust to their word, without having an individual acquaintance with them?"

Marion shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, bother!" she said, gayly, "you are not turning theologian, or police detective in search of suspicious characters, are you? I never pretend to pry into my notions for and against people and things; if I was betrayed into anything that sounded like common sense I beg your pardon. I am out on a frolic, and mean to have it if there is any such thing."

"Well, before you go back into absolute nonsense let me ask you one more question. Do you really feel as deeply as you pretended to that man, on all these questions of the Chautauqua conscience? I mean, is it a vital point in your estimation whether people go there to church on Sunday or not?"

Marion hesitated, and a fine glow deepened on her face as she said, after a little, speaking with grave dignity:

"I do not know that I can explain myself to you, Ruth, and I dare say that I seem to you like a bundle of contradictions; but it is a real

pleasure to me to come in contact with people who have earnest faith and eager enthusiasm over *anything*, and principle enough to stand by their views through evil and good report. In this way, and to a great degree, this meeting is a positive delight to me, though I know personally as little about the feeling from which they think their actions take rise as any mortal can. Does that answer satisfy you, my blessed mother confessor? or are you more muddled than ever over what I do, and especially over what I do *not* believe?"

"If I believed as much as you do I should look further."

Ruth said this with emphasis; and there was that in it which, despite her attempts to throw it off, set Marion to thinking, and kept her wonderfully quiet during their return trip.

On the whole, the flight to Mayville was not viewed entirely in the light of a success. Ruth had been quiet and grave for some time, when she suddenly spoke in her most composed and decided voice:

"I shall go to Saratoga on Monday, whether any one else will or not; I shall find plenty of

friends to welcome me, and I shall take the morning train from here,"

But she didn't.

Meantime Flossy's afternoon had been an uninterrupted satisfaction to her. She attended the children's meeting, and it was perfectly amazing to her newly awakened brain how many of the stories, used to point truths for the children, touched home to her.

Dr. Hurlbut, of Plainfield, seemed to have especially planned his address for the purpose of hitting at some of the markedly weak points in her character, though no doubt the good man would have been utterly amazed had he known her thoughts.

She listened and laughed with the rest over the story of the poor tailor who promised a coat to a customer for one, two and three weeks, heaping up his promises one on the other until he had a perfect pyramid of them, only to topple about his ears. She heard with the rest the magnificent voice ring out the solemn conclusion:

"Children, he did not mean to lie. He did not even think he was a liar. He only *broke his promises.*"

They all heard, and I don't know how many shivered over it, but I *do* know that to Flossy Shipley it seemed as if some one had struck her an actual blow. Was it possible that the easy sentences, the easy promises, to "write," to "come," to "bring this," to "tell that," made so gracefully, sounding so kindly, costing so little because forgotten almost as soon as her head was urned away, actually belonged in that list described by the ugly word "lie." Flossy had been a special sinner in this department of polite wickedness because it just accorded with her nature; such promises were so easy to make, and seemed to please people, and were so easy to forget. Like the tailor, she hadn't meant to be a liar, nor dreamed that she was one.

But her wide-open ears took it all in, and her roused brain turned the thought over and over, until, be it known to you, that that girl's happy pastor, when he receives from her a decided, "Yes, sir, I will do it," may rest assured that unless something beyond her control intervenes she will be at her post.

So much did Dr. Hurlbut accomplish that afternoon without ever knowing it. There were

many things done that afternoon, I suspect, that only the light of the judgement day will reveal. Over the story of the two workmen, who each resolved to stick to a certain effort for six months, and did it, the one earning thereby a patent right worth thousands of dollars, and the other teaching a little dog how to dance to the whistling of a certain tune, Flossy looked unutterably sober, while the laughter swelled to a perfect roar around her. It was hard to feel that not "six months" only, but a dozen years of intelligent life, were gone from her, and she had not even taught a dog to dance a jig! That was the very way she put it in her humility; and I do not say that she placed it too low, because really I don't know that Flossy Shipley had *ever had* even so settled a purpose in life as that! She had simply fluttered around the edge of this solemn business that we call living.

But along with the sober thought glowed the earnest purpose: given another dozen years to my young lady's life and they will bear a different record; and whatever they bear, Dr. Hurlburt will be in a sense responsible for, though he never saw her and probably never will. Verily

this living is a complicated bewildering thing. Well for us that *all* the weight of the responsibility is not ours to bear.

There was still another story, and over it Flossy's lips parted, and her eyes glowed with feeling. That wonderful machine that the most skillful workmen tried in vain to repair, that was useless and worthless, until the name of the owner was found on it, and he was sent for, then indeed it found the master-hand, the only one who could right it; she did not need Dr. Hurlbut's glowing application. "So He who made us, and engraved his name, his image, on our bodies, can alone take our hearts and make them right."

Flossy listened to this and the sentences that followed, thrilling her heart with their power and beauty — thrilling as they would not have done one week ago, for did she not know by actual experience just how blessed a worker the great Maker was? Had she not carried her heart to him, and had he not left his indelible impression there? Oh, this was a wonderful meeting to Flossy — one that she will never forget — one that many others will have reason to

remember, because of the way in which she listened. But was it not strange, the way in which her education was being cared for?

After tea she stood at the entrance of the tent, looking out for the girls — looking out, also, on the cool, quiet sunset and the glory spread everywhere, for there had been sunshine that day, part of the time, and there was a clear sun setting. Under her arm she held the treasure which she had in the morning determined to possess — a good, plain, large-print Bible, not at all like the velvet-covered one that lay on her toilet-stand at home, but such as the needs of Bible students at Chautauqua had demanded, and therefore much better fitted for actual service than the velvet.

Among the many passers-by came Mrs. Smythe. She halted before Flossy.

"Good-evening. I thought your party must have left. I haven't seen you since Thursday. Haven't you been fearfully bored? We are going to leave on Monday morning — going to Saratoga. Don't some of you want to join us?

"I don't know," Flossy said, thoughtfully mindful of Ruth and her plan that had not

worked. "It is possible that Miss Erskine may. Do your entire party go?"

"Oh, not my nephew, of course! Nothing could tear him away. He is perfectly charmed with all this singing and praying and preaching, but I confess it is too much of a good thing for me. I am not intellectually inclined, I like the music very well, and some of the addresses are fine; but there is such a thing as carrying meetings to excess."

At this point she turned quickly at the sound of a firm step behind her, and greeted a young man.

"Speak of angels and you hear their wings, or the squeak of their boots," she said. "We were just talking about you, Evan. My nephew, Mr. Roberts, Miss Shipley. I believe you have never met before."

Had they not! There was a heightened flush on the cheek of each as they shook hands. It was clear that each recognized the other.

"Are we strangers?" he asked, with a bright smile, speaking so low that Mrs. Smythe, whose attention had already wandered from them to a group who were passing, did not hear the words.

"On the contrary, I think we are related, though I do not know that we have happened to hear each other's names before."

Flossy understood the relationship — sons and daughters of one Father — for she knew this was the young man who had twice questioned her concerning her allegiance to that Father. Also, she remembered him as the only one whom she had ever heard pray for her.

Mrs. Symthe called out a gay good-evening to them, and joined a party of friends, and Mr. Roberts leaned against a tree and prepared to cultivate the acquaintance of his newly-found relative.

"You have one of those large, sensible-looking Bibles, I see," he said. "I have been very much tempted, but I could not make myself feel that I really needed one."

"I really needed mine," Flossy said, smiling. "I left my Bible at home. I had not such a thought as bringing it along. I feel now as if I had a treasure that I didn't know how to use. It is quite new to me. I don't know where to read first, but I suppose it makes no difference."

"Indeed it does make great difference," he

said, smiling, "and you will enjoy finding out how to read it. Chautauqua is a good place for such a study, and the Bible reading this evening is an excellent place to commence. Are you going?"

"Yes, indeed!" Flossy said, with brightening eyes. "I have been looking forward to it all day. I can't think what a Bible reading is. Do they just read verses in the Bible?"

"Yes," he said, smiling. "It is just Bible verses, with a word of explanation now and then and a little singing. But the Bible verses are something remarkable, as you will see. It is nearly time for service. Are you ready? Shall we walk down and secure seats?"

So they went down together in the early twilight, and took seats under the trees amid the glowing of brilliant lights and the soft sound of music coming from the piano on the stand.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SILENT WITNESS.

THAT Bible reading! I wish I could make it appear to you as it did to Fossy Shipley. Not that either, because I trust that the sound of the Bible verses is not so utterly new to you as it was to her — rather, that it might sound to you as it did to the earnest-souled young man who sat beside her, taking in every word with as much eagerness as if some of the verses had not been his dear and long-cherished friends; nay, with more eagerness on that account.

Do you know Dr. Parsons, of Boston? It was he who conducted that reading, and his theme was, "The Coming of the Lord."

Let me give you just a few of the groupings as he called them forth from his congregation under the trees, and which he called "the Lord's own testimonies to his coming:"

"Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." "Therefore, be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."

Four solemn warnings from the Head of the vineyard. They reached to Flossy's very soul, and she had that old well-known thrill of feeling that almost every Christian has some time experienced.

"If *I* had only been there; if He had spoken such words to *me*, I could never, never have forgotten, or been neglectful. If I could only have heard Him speak!" And as if in answer to this longing cry Dr. Parsons himself read the next solemn sentence, read it in such a way that it almost seemed as if this might be the sacred garden, and *Himself* standing among the olive-trees speaking even to *her*:

"And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." Here, then, was her direction from His own lips. Though centuries had passed since He spoke them they echoed down to her. She was not overwhelmed; she was not crushed by the new and solemn sense of her calling that flowed over her. The Lord himself was there in every deed, and whispered in her ear, "It is I, be not afraid." And her heart responded solemnly, "Aye, Lord, I feel thy presence; I have been sleeping, but I am awake, and from henceforth I *will* watch."

That Bible reading was like a whole week of theological study to Flossy. It was not that she learned simply about the blessed assurance, the weight of testimony amounting to an absolute certainty, concerning the coming of the Lord. But there were so many truths growing out from that, so many incentives to be up and doing; for she found before the reading closed that one must not only watch, but in the watching work; and there were so many reasons why she should, and so many hints as to the way and the time. Then there was, also, the most blessed discovery that the Bible was not a book to treat like an

arithmetic. That one must read through the Book of Genesis, and then go on to Exodus, a chapter to-day, two chapters to-morrow, and perhaps some days, when one was not in too great a hurry and could read very fast, take half a dozen chapters, and so get through it. But she learned that there were little connecting links of sweetness all the way through the book; that she had a right to look over in Revelation for an explanation of something that was stated in Deuteronomy. She did not learn all this, either, at this one time; but she got a vivid hint of it, strong enough to keep her hunting and pulling at the lovely golden thread of the Bible for long years to come.

There were special points about the closing verses that throbbed in her heart, and awakened purposes that never slept again. It was the gentleman who sat beside her who read the solemn words of the verse:

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. See-

ing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

His voice was very earnest, and his face had an eager look of solemn joy.

From it she felt the truth that while the words which he had been reading were full of solemnity, and while he felt the sense of responsibility, there was also that in them which filled his heart with great joy, for when that time should come would not he be with his Lord?

Again, when a little later he gave the closing verses of this wonderful lesson, reading them from her Bible, because in the dimness the print was larger and clearer than his own, they made the conclusion of the whole matter:

"Ye are the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of the darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober."

He marked it with his pencil as he finished reading, and as he returned the book to her keeping he said with a smile:

"We will, shall we not?"

And it felt to Flossy like a convenant, wit

nessed by the Lord himself. But Dr. Parsons, you know, knew nothing of all this. Chautauqua was the place for sowing the seed; they could only hope that the Lord of the vineyard was looking on and watching over the coming harvest; it was not for their eyes to see the fruits.

Sunday morning at Chautauqua! None of all the many hundreds who spent the day within the shadow of that sweet and leafy place have surely forgotten how the quaint and quiet beauty of the place and its surroundings fell upon them; they know just how the birds sang among those tall old trees; they know just how still and blue and clear the lake looked as they caught glimpes of it through the quivering green of myriad leaves; they know just how clearly the Chautauqua bells cut the air and called to the worship. It needs not even these few words to recall the place in its beauty to the hearts of those who worshiped there that day; and for you who did not see it nor feel its power there is no use to try to describe Chautauqua. Only this, it is a place to love and look back to with a sort of sweet and tender longing all your lives.

Our girls felt somewhat of the sacredness of the place; at least they went around with a more decided feeling that it was Sunday than they had ever realized before. Three of them did.

To Flossy this day was like the revelation of a new heaven and a new earth. Her first Sunday in Christ!

There was no sunshine, neither was there rain. Just a hush of all things, and sweetness everywhere.

After breakfast Ruth and Marion lolled on their cots and studied the programme, while the other two made hasty toilets, and announced their intention of going to Sunday-school.

"What in the name of sense takes you?" queried Marion, rising on one elbow, the better to view this strange phenomena.

"Why I have a mission," Eurie said. "About three thousand people have been talking all this week about teaching a few Bible verses to some children to-day, and I am going to find out what they are, and what is so wonderful about them. Besides, I was taken for a being named Miss Rider, and on inquiry I find her to be what they call an infant-class teacher, so I am going to hunt

her up and see if we look alike and are affin ities."

Flossy chose to make no answer at all, and presently the two departed together to attend their first Sabbath-school since they were known as children. As they passed a certain tent Eurie's ready ears gained information from other passers-by:

"This is where the little children are; Miss Rider is going to teach them."

Eurie halted.

"*I'm* going in here," she said, decidedly, to Flossy. "That is the very lady I am in search of." And seeing Flossy hesitate, she added: "Oh, you may go on, it is just as well to divide our forces; we may each have some wonderful adventure. You go your way and I will go mine, and we'll see what will come of it."

The tent was full apparently; but that spirit which was rife at Chautauqua, and which prompted everybody to try to look out a little for the comfort of everybody else, made a seat full of ladies crowd a little and make room for her. Rows and rows of little people with smiling faces and shining eyes! It was a pretty sight

Eurie gave eager attention to the lady who was talking to them, and laughed a little to herself over the dissimilarity of their appearance.

"Hair and eyes and height, and everything else, totally unlike me!" she said. "She is older than I, too, ever so much. She doesn't look as I thought Miss Rider would."

But what she was saying proved to be very interesting, not only to the little people, but to Eurie. She listened eagerly. It was important to discover what had been so stirring the Sunday-school world all the week. She was not left in doubt; the story was plainly, clearly, fascinatingly told; it was that tender one of the sick man so long waiting, waiting to be helped into the pool; disappointed year after year, until one blessed day Jesus came that way and asked one simple question, and received an eager answer, and gave one brief command, and, lo! the work was done! The long, long years of pain and trial were over! Do you think this seemed like a wonderful story to Eurie? Do you think her cheeks glowed with joy over the thought of the great love and the great power of Jesus?

Alas, alas! to her there was no beauty in him.

This simple tender story did not move her as the commonplace account of a common sickness and common recovery given in a village paper would have done. The very most that she thought of it was this: "That Miss Rider has a good deal of dramatic power. How well she tells the story! But dear me! how stupid it must be. What is the use of taking so much trouble for these little midgets? They don't understand the story, and of what use would it be to them if they did? Something that happened to somebody hundreds of years ago."

But now her attention was arrested by the sound of a very loud whisper just behind her, given in a childish voice. "Miss Rider, Miss Rider," the child was saying, and emphasizing her whisper by a pull at a lady's dress. Eurie turned quickly; the dress belonged to a young, fair girl, with fresh glowing face and large bright eyes, that shone now with feeling as she listened eagerly to this story, and to the comments of the children concerning it. Then she in turn whispered to the lady nearest her:

"Is it Miss Rider who is teaching?"

"No, it is Mrs. Clark, of Newark. That is Miss Rider leaning against a post."

Then Eurie looked back to her. "She is no older than I," she murmured; "indeed not so old, I should think. Her hair must be exactly the color of mine, and we are about the same height. I wonder if we *do* look in the least alike? What do I care!" Yet still she looked; the bright face fascinated her. The little child had won the lady's attention; and the lips and eyes, and indeed the whole face, were vivid with animation as she bent low and answered some troubled question, appealing to the diagram on the board, and making clear her answer by rapid gestures with her fingers. The lady beside Eurie volunteered some more information.

"Miss Rider was to have taught this class, I heard. I wonder why she didn't?"

"I don't know," Eurie answered, briefly. Then she looked back at her again. "She is jealous," she said to herself. "She was to have taught this class this morning, and by some blundering she was left out, and she is disgusted. She will say that such teaching as this amounts to nothing; she could have done it five times as well; or, if she doesn't *say* that last, she will think it and act it. I have no doubt these

rival teachers cordially hate each other, like politicians."

Nevertheless that fresh young face, with its glow of feeling, fascinated her. She kept looking at her; she gave no more attention to the lesson. What was it, after all, but an old story that had nothing to do with her; the fact that it was taken from the Bible was proof enough of that. But she watched Miss Rider. The session closed and that lady pressed forward to assist in giving out papers. The crowd pushed the willing Eurie nearer to her, so near that she could catch the sentence that she was eagerly saying to the lady near her.

"Isn't Mrs. Clark delightful? It was such a beautiful lesson this morning. I think it is such a treat and such a privilege to be allowed to listen to her. Yes, darling," this last to another little one claiming a word, "of course Jesus can hear you now, just as well as though He stood here. He often says to people, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' He has said so to you this morning."

Eurie turned away quickly. She had had her lesson. It wasn't from the Bible, nor yet

did she find it in those hundred little faces so eager to know the story in all its details. It was just in that young face not so old as hers, so bright, so strong, so thoroughly alert, and so thoroughly enlisted in this matter. The vivid contrast between that life and hers struck Eurie with the force of a new revelation.

She went to the general service under the trees; she heard a sermon from Dr. Pierce, so full of power and eloquence that to many who heard it there came new resolves, new purposes, new plans. I beg her pardon, she did not listen; she simply occupied a seat and looked as though she was a listener.

But the truth was, she had not learned yet to listen to sermons. The very fact that it was a sermon made it clear to her mind that there was to be nothing in it for her; this had been her education. In reality, during that hour of worship she was engaged in watching the changeful play of expression on Miss Rider's face, as her eyes brightened and glowed with enthusiasm or trembled with tears, according as the preacher's words roused or subdued her.

Well, Eurie had her lesson. It was not from

the Bible, it was not from the preacher's lips except incidentally, but it was from a living epistle. "Ye shall be witnesses of me," was the promise of Christ in the long ago, just before the cloud received him out of sight. Is not that promise verified to us often and often when we know it not?

Miss Rider had no means of knowing as she sat a listener that Sabbath morning that she was witnessing for Christ. But she was just as surely speaking for him as though she had stood up amid that throng and said: "I love Jesus." "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." And the poet has said: "They also serve who only stand and wait." Blessed are those in whom the waiting and the service go together.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN OLD STORY.

MEANTIME Flossy, deserted by her companion, made her way somewhat timidly down to the stand, amazed by the great congregation of people who had formed themselves into a Sunday-school. With all their haste the girls had gotten a very late start. The opening exercises were all over, and the numerous teachers were turning to their work. Strangely enough, the first person whom Flossy's eye took in distinctly enough for recognition was Mr. Roberts. He had recognized her, also, and was coming toward her.

"How do you do this morning?" he said, holding out his hand. "Do you know I have a mission for you? There are two boys who seem

to belong to nobody, and to have nothing in common with this gathering, except curiosity. The superintendent has twice tried to charm them in, but without success — they will come no further than that tree. I think they have slipped in from the village, probably in a most unorthodox fashion, and what I am coming at is, will you go out under the tree to them and beguile them into attending a Sabbath-school for once in their lives? They look to me as though it was probably a rare occurrence."

Now you are not to suppose that this invitation came to Flossy with the same sound that it would have had to you, if Mr. Roberts had come to you that Sabbath morning and asked you to tell those two boys a Bible story. It is something that you have probably been doing a good deal of, all your grown-up life, and two boys at Chautauqua are no more to you than two boys anywhere else, except that there is a delightful sensation connected with having a class-room out in the open air. But imagine yourself suddenly confronted by Dr. Vincent, and asked if you would be so kind as to step on the platform and preach to five thousand people, from a text

hat he would select for you! Now you have something of an idea as to how this request felt to Flossy. A rare glow spread all over her face, and she looked up at her questioner with eyes that were quivering in tears.

"You do not know what you are saying," she said, in low and trembling voice. "I have not been to a Sabbath-school in seven years, and I never taught anybody anything in my life."

It was true that he did not know. It seemed to him such a very little thing that he had asked. However, he spoke gently enough as one who was courteous, even when he could not quite comprehend.

"Then is not to-day a good time to commence? You will surely never have a better opportunity."

But she shook her head, and turned quite away from him, walking down among the trees where no people were. Her joy was all gone, and her pleasant time. She had meant to go to Sabbath-school; to sit down quietly in some body's class and learn, oh! a very great deal during the next hour. Now she was all stirred up, and could not go anywhere.

As for Mr. Roberts, he went back to the large class who were waiting for him. And those two boys hovered around the edge of that feast like hungry creatures who yet had never learned to come to the table and take their places. Flossy looked at them; at first indignantly, as at miserable beings who had spoiled her pleasure; then she became fascinated by their bright, dirty faces and roguish ways. She edged a little nearer to them. Boys she was afraid of; she knew nothing about them. Had they been a little older, and been dressed well, and been of the stamp of boys who knew how to bring her handkerchief to her when she dropped it, she would have known what to say to them. But boys who were not more than twelve or fourteen, and who were both ragged and dirty, were new phases of life to her.

"Why don't you go to Sunday-school?" she questioned at last, with a timid air. She could at least ask that. They were not the least timid as to answering; the older and the dirtier of the two turned his roguish eyes on her and surveyed her from head to foot before he said:

"Why don't you?"

Flossy was unprepared for this question, but she answered quickly and truthfully:

"Because I am afraid to go."

Both boys stared, and then laughed, and the other younger one said:

"So be we."

"I suppose we are both very silly," Flossy said. "But I have not been to Sunday-school for so long that I have forgotten all about it. Let's have one of our own that we are not afraid to go to."

And she sat bravely down on the stump at her feet; her mood had changed very suddenly; only yesterday she had read a verse in that Bible, and it thrilled her then, and came to her now:

"The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole."

Suppose she were the man, and these were the Jews, could she not say to them, "He has made me whole"? She could tell them about that pool, and about the sick man. It wouldn't be teaching in Sunday-school, but it would be doing the best thing that she could.

It suddenly occurred to her to wonder where

the lesson was that was being taught this morning, and she consulted the lesson leaf that Mr. Roberts had left in her hand. The glow on her face deepened and spread as she recognized the very story which had so filled her heart the day before! What if the great Physician had actually selected her to tell of that miracle of healing to these two neglected ones! Surely they were not so formidable as the Jews! But how in the world to begin was a bewilderment. Clearly she must decide at once if she was to have any class, for her two boys began to look about them, and show signs of flight.

"Did you ever hear about a wonderful spring that used to cure people?"

"Lots of 'em. I used to live right by one that cured the rheumatiz."

"But this one would cure other things, only it wouldn't cure people all the time. There was just one time in the year when it would do it; and then the one that got in first was the only one cured."

Her listeners looked skeptical.

"What was that for?" queried the bolder of the two. "Why didn't it cure but one?"

"I don't know," Flossy said. "There are ever so many things that I know that I can't tell why they are so. For instance, I don't know why that spring you have been telling me about cures the rheumatism, but I know it does, for you told me so."

"No more do I," the boy said, promptly, having in his heart a rising respect for the young teacher and her story."

Then this new beginner, with the air of a diplomatist, told all the details of this wonderful cure, without once mentioning the name of either person or place. An innate sense of the human heart told her that "Jerusalem" and "Jesus" were both probably connected in the minds of these two with the Bible, and their appearance told her that they were likely to be skeptical as to the interest of Bible stories. But, like all ignorant persons, there was a credulous side to their nature. It is surprising what marvelous stories people are prepared to receive and credit, provided only that they do not come from the Bible, with a "Thus saith the Lord" to vouch for them. Then, indeed, they are apt to become "unreasonable" and "improbable." Presently

her boys volunteered some remarks and asked some questions.

"Jolly! that fellow must have felt good: I guess he wanted to run all around the country and tell about it. Where was this spring, and what was the man's name that cured him?"

The other chimed in: "Yes, and how did he do it? That's what I'm after. And is he dead? 'cause I don't hear of no such cures now-days."

Then was Flossy tremulous of heart. She had become eagerly interested in her story and her boys. Would the charm that she had woven be broken the moment they knew the story's origin? But of course she must tell them, for what good else would the story do?

"He is dead," she said, slowly, answering the last question first. "That is, he is what *you* call dead. But, of course, you know as well as I do that that doesn't mean what it seems to; it means simply that he doesn't live in the same place that he once did. He went to heaven to live ever so many years ago."

She waited to feel the effect of this announcement. The boys were silent and grave. They had evidently heard of heaven, and had some

measure of respect for the name. The new teacher did not know what to say next. The boys helped her. The younger one drew a heavy sigh.

"Well, all I've got to say is, I wish he was alive now," he said, in a regretful tone, "'cause my mother has been sick longer than thirty-eight years; she has been sick about all her life, and she is real bad now, so she can't walk at all. I s'pose he could cure her if he was here."

"I suppose he could cure her now." Flossy said this slowly, reverently, looking earnestly at the boy, hoping to convey to him a sense of her meaning. He looked utterly puzzled. Light began to dawn on the face of the older boy.

"She's been tellin' us one of them Bible stories," he said, speaking not to Flossy, but to his companion, and assuming an injured air, as if a wrong had been done them.

Flossy spoke quickly:

"Of course I have. I thought you wanted to hear something that really happened, and not a made-up story." This seemed to be an appeal to their dignity, and they eyed her reflectively

"How do you know it happened?" ventured the younger one.

Flossy gave a rapid and animated answer.

"There are about a hundred reasons why I know it; it would take me all day to tell you half of them. But one is, that I read it in a book which good men who know a great deal, and who have been studying all their lives to find out about it, say they know is true; and I believe what they tell me about Washington and Lincoln and other men whom I never saw, so I ought to believe them when they tell me about this man."

"But there's *one* thing you don't know. You don't know that he can cure folks now, and he don't do it. This was spoken with a quiet positiveness, and with the air that said, "*That* can't be disputed, and you know it can't."

Flossy hesitated just a moment; the glow on her face deepened and spread. Then she answered in much the same tone that the boy had used:

"I know he *can*, and I have good reason for knowing. I'll tell you a secret; you are the very first persons I have told about it, but he has cured me. I have been sick all my life; when I came here to Chautauqua I was sick. I

could not do anything that I was made to do, and I kept doing things all the time that were not meant for me to do, but he has cured me."

The boys looked at her in absolute incredulous wonder.

"Was you sick in bed when you came?" ventured one of them at last.

"No; it is not that kind of sickness that I mean. That is when the body is sick, the body that when the soul goes away looks like nothing but marble, can not move, nor feel, nor speak; that isn't of much consequence, you know, because we are sure that the soul will go away from it after awhile. It is this soul of mine that is going to live forever that was cured."

"How do you know it was?" came again from these wondering boys. Flossy smiled a rare, bright smile that charmed them.

"If *yours* had been cured you would not ask me that question," she said; "you would *know* how I know it. But I can't tell you how it is: don't you know there are some things that you are sure of that you can't explain? You are sure you can think, aren't you? but how would you set to work to explain to me that you are

sure? The only way that you can know how is by going to this doctor and getting cured; then you will understand."

"I'd like him if he would cure folks' *bodies*," began the boy who had a sick mother, speaking in a doubtful, somewhat dissatisfied tone

"He does," Flossy said, quickly. "Don't people's bodies get well sometimes? and who can cure bodies except the one who made them? If you want your mother cured you ought to try him. If she is to be made well you may be sure that he can do it; but why should he so long as you do not care enough about it to ask him?"

There was a rush and a bustle among the crowds in the distance. Sunday-school session was over, and the great company were moving for seats for the morning service. The boys took the alarm and fled, each glancing back to nod and smile at the bright apparition who had told them a story. Flossy picked up her Bible; she had not needed to use it during this talk. The story of Bethesda had burned itself so into her heart with that morning reading that she had no need to look at it again. She gave a thoughtful little sigh.

"I don't know about that being teaching," she said within her heart, "but I certainly told them about Jesus, and I told them it was Jesus who had 'made me whole.' I made my own experience 'witness' for me to that degree. If that is what they mean by teaching I like to do it. I mean to go to Sunday-school just as soon as I get home, and if I find out that they just tell about things as they are in the Bible I can do it. I can make the boys listen to me, I know."

Bright little fairy that she was! There was a new glow about her face. She was waking to the thought that there *was* such a thing as power over people's brains. No danger but she will use her knowledge. Let me tell you another thing that Chautauqua did for her. It planted the seed that shall blossom into splendid teaching. There was one teacher who gave many glances that morning to the little group around that old tree stump. Mr. Roberts, from his point of observation, not far away, watched this scene from beginning to end. It fascinated him. He saw the timid beginning and the ever-in

creasing interest, until, when Flossy closed her Bible and arose, he turned his eyes from her with a quiet smile in them, and to himself he said: "Unless I am very greatly mistaken she has found something that she can do."

CHAPTER XX.

PEOPLE WHO, "HAVING EYES, SEE NOT."

"GIRLS!" said Eurie, as she munched a doughnut, which she had brought from the lunch-table with her, and lounged on a camp-chair, waiting for the afternoon service, "do you know that Flossy taught a class in Sunday-school this morning?"

"Taught a class!" repeated both Marion and Ruth in one voice, and with about equal degrees of amazement.

"She did, as true as the world. That is, she must have been teaching. The way of it was this: I went to see the little midgets exhibit themselves, and when I came out of the tent

and walked over toward the stand, there sat Flossy on that old stump just back of the stand, and before her were two of the roughest-looking boys that ever emerged from the backwoods. They were ragged and dirty and wild; and as wicked little imps as one could find, I am sure. Flossy was talking to them, and she had a large Bible in her lap and one of those Lesson Leaves that they flutter about here so much; and — well, altogether it was an amazing sight! She was certainly talking to them with all her might, and they were listening; and it is my opinion that she was trying to play Sunday-school teacher, and give them a lesson. You know she is an imitative little sheep, and always was."

"Nonsense!" Ruth said, and she seemed to speak more sharply than the occasion warranted. "Just as if Flossy Shipley couldn't have anything to say to two boys but what she found in the Bible! Little she knows what is in it, for that matter. I suppose she wandered out that way because she did not know what else to do with herself, and talked to the boys by way of

amusement. She has often amused herself in that way, I am sure."

"Ah, yes; but these specimens were rather too youthful and dirty for that sort of amusement, and she had a Bible in her lap."

"What of that! Bibles are as common as leaves here. I found two lying on the seat which I took this morning. People seem to think the art of stealing has not found its way here."

"Flossy is changed," interrupted Marion. "The mouse is certainly different from what *I* ever saw her before; she seems so quiet and self-sustained. I thought she was bored. Why, I expected her to hail a trip to her dear Saratoga with absolute delight! She belongs to just the class of people who would find the intellectual element here too strong for her, and would have to flutter off in that direction in self-defense. Ruthie, you have the temper of an angel not to fly out at me for bringing in Saratoga every few minutes. It isn't with 'malice aforethought,' I assure you. I forget your projected scheme whenever I speak of it; but you must allow me to be astonished over Flossy's re

fusal to go with you. Something has come over the mousie that is not explainable by any of the laws of science with which I am acquainted."

"Don't trouble yourself to apologize, I beg. I hope you do not think I am so foolish as to care anything about your hints as to Saratoga. Of course I recognize my right in this world to be governed by my own tastes and inclinations. I have enjoyed that privilege too long to be disturbed by trifles." This from Ruth; but I shall have to admit that it was very stiffly spoken, and if she had but known it, indicated that she *did* care a great deal. In truth she was very sore over her position and her plans. She who had prided herself on her intellectuality bored to the very point of leaving, and Flossy, who had been remarkable for nothing but flutter and fashion, actually so interested that she could not be coaxed into going away! What *was* it that interested her? That was the question which interested and puzzled Ruth. She studied over it during all the time that Marion and Eurie were chatting about the morning service.

Flossy *was* different; there was no shutting one's eyes to that fact. The truth was that she

had suddenly seemed to have little in common with her own party. She certainly said little to them; she made no complaints as to inconveniences, even when they amounted to positive annoyances with the rest of the party; she had given up afternoon toilets altogether, and in fact the subject of dress seemed to be one that had suddenly sunken into such insignificance as to cease to claim her thoughts at all.

Grave changes these to be found in Flossy Shipley. Then, too, she had taken to wandering away alone in the twilight; during the short spaces between services she was nowhere to be found, but the Chautauqua bell brought her back invariably in time to make ready for the next service. "There is certainly more to the little mouse than I ever expected before. If Chautauqua wakes *our* wits as it has Flossy's we shall have reason to bless the day that Dr. Vincent invented it." This Ruth heard from Marion as she roused herself from her reverie to give attention to what the girls were saying. They had got back to a discussion of Flossy again. It was a subject that someway annoyed Ruth, so she dismissed it, and made ready for the afternoon meeting, whither they all went.

To Marion the morning sermon had been an intellectual treat. She had a way of listening to sermons that would have been very disheartening to the preacher if he had known of it. She had learned how to divest herself of all personality. The subject was one that had nothing to do with her; the application of solemn truths were for the people around her who believed in these things, but never for her; so she listened and enjoyed, just as she enjoyed a book or a picture, just as if she had no soul at all, nothing but an intellect.

It was very rare indeed that an arrow from any one's quiver touched her. But there was one single sentence in Dr. Pierce's sermon that was destined to haunt her. Said he: "When the blind man was questioned he couldn't argue, he didn't try to; but he could stand up there before them and say, 'Whereas I was blind, now I see; make the most of that.' And wasn't it an unanswerable argument? There is no argument like it. When men are honest and earnest and spiritual in Wall Street, it tells."

Now that was just the kind of sentence to delight Marion's heart. The inconsistencies of

Christians was one of her very strong points; she saw them bristling out everywhere, and she looked about her with a satisfied smile on her face that so large a company of them were getting so sharp a thrust as this.

And suddenly their flashed across her brain an utterly new thought. "Whereas I was *blind*, now I see." "Perhaps," she said to herself—'*perhaps* I am blind. What if that should be the only reason why these things are not to me as they are to others. How do I know, after all, but there may really be a spiritual blindness, and that it may be holding me? How do I know but that the reason some of these poor ignorant people whom I meet are so firm in their belief of Christ and heaven is because they have had just this experience?

"'Whereas I *was* blind, now I see!' How can I possibly tell but that this may be the case? I wonder what I *do* think anyway? Do I really think that all these men gathered here are either deceived or deceivers? One or the other they must be — and either position is too silly to sustain — or else I must be blind. If there should be such a thing as seeing, and I discover it too

late! If there *is* a too late to this thing, and I do not find it out simply because I am blind, what then? The sun shines, of course, though I dare say an entirely blind man doesn't believe it. Doesn't have an idea anyway what it is — how can he?"

Over and over did she revolve this sentence, and look at it from every attainable standpoint. No use to try to shut it off, back it came. All the clatter with which she had amused herself during the interval between meetings had not banished it. No sooner was she seated under those trees waiting for the afternoon service than the thought presented itself for her to consider.

"I wonder if there are different degrees of moral blindness?" she said, suddenly. "People who can see just enough to enable them to keep constantly going the wrong way, so that they are no better off than the blind, except that they admit that there is such a thing as seeing. The thing is possible, I suppose."

Ruth turned and looked at her wonderingly.

"What *are* you talking about?" she asked at last.

"I'm moralizing," Marion said, laughing. "You yourself suggested that train of thought. I was wondering which of us was right in our notions, you or I; and, for all practical purposes, what difference it made."

"You are too high up for me to follow. I haven't the least idea what you mean."

"Why, I tell you I was contrasting our conditions. Let me see if I have a right view of them. Don't you honestly think that there is a God, and a heaven, and a hell, and that to escape the one place and secure the other certain efforts upon your part are necessary?"

"Why, of course I think so. I have never made any pretense of disbelieving all these things. I think it is foolish to do so."

"Exactly. Now for one question more: Have you made the effort that you believe to be necessary?"

"Have you been hired as an exhorter?" Ruth said, trying to laugh. "Why, no, I can not say that I have."

"Well, then, suppose you and I should both die to-night. *I* don't believe any of these things; you do, but you don't practice on your

belief. Then, according to your own view, you will be lost forever; and, according to that same view, so shall I. Now, practically, what difference is there between us? So if it is really blindness, why may not one be totally blind as well as to have a little sight that keeps one all the time in the wrong way?"

"I dare say we are quite as well off," Ruth said, composedly; "only I think there is this point of difference between us. I think your position is silly. I don't see how any one who has studied Paley and Butler, and in fact any of the sciences, can think so foolish a thing as you pretend to. One doesn't like to be foolish, even if one doesn't happen to be a Christian."

"Foolish?" Marion repeated, and there was a fine glow on her face. "Don't you go and talk anything so wild as that! If there is any class of people in this world who profess to be simpletons, and act up to their professions, it is you people who believe *everything* and *do* nothing. Now just look at the thing for a minute. Suppose you say, 'There is a precipice over there, and every whiff of wind blows us nearer to it; we will surely go over if we sit here; we ought

to go up on that hill; I know that is a safe place,' and yet you sit perfectly still. And suppose I say, 'I don't believe there is any such thing as a precipice, and I believe this is just as safe a place as there is anywhere,' and *I* sit still. Now I should like to know which of us was acting the sillier?"

"You would be," Ruth said, stoutly, "if you persisted in disbelieving what could be proved to you so clearly that no person with common sense would think of denying it."

"Humph!" said Marion, settling back; "in that case I think there would be very little chance for each to accuse the other of folly; only I confess to you just this, Ruth Erskine, if you could *prove* to me that there was a precipice over there, and that we were being carried toward it, and that the hill was safe, I know in my very soul that I should get up and go to that hill. I would not be such a fool as to delay, I know I wouldn't."

"You are frank," Ruth said, and her face was flushed. "I am sure I don't see why you don't make the attempt and decide for yourself, if you feel this thing so deeply. *I* think there ought

to be a prayer-meeting on your account. If I knew Dr. Vincent I would try to have this thing turned into a regular camp-meeting time, then you would doubtless get all the help you need."

Marion laughed good-humoredly.

"Don't waste your sarcasm on me," she said, cheerily; "keep your weapons for more impressible subjects. You know I am not in the least afraid of any such arguments. I have been talking downright truth and common sense, and you know it, and are hit; that is what makes you sarcastic. Did you know that was at the bottom of most sarcasm, my dear?"

"Do hush, please. These people before us are trying hard to hear what the speaker is saying."

This was Ruth's answer; but she had had her sermon; and of all the preachers at Chautauqua the one who had preached to *her* was Marion Wilbur, the infidel school-teacher! It was her use of Dr. Pierce's arrow that had thrust Ruth. She gave herself up to the thought of it all during that wonderful afternoon meeting. Very little did she hear of the speeches, save now and then a sentence more vivid than the rest; her

brain was busy with new thoughts. *Was* it all so very queer? Did it look to others than Marion a strange way to live? Did she actually believe these things for which she had been contending? If she did, was she in very deed an idiot? It actually began to look as though she might be. She was not wild like Eurie, nor intense and emotional, like Marion; she was still and cold, and, in her way, slow; given to weighing thoughts, and acting calmly from decisions rather than from impulse. It struck her oddly enough now that, having so stoutly defended the cardinal doctrines of Christian faith, she should have no weapons except sarcasm with which to meet a bold appeal to her inconsistency.

"When I get home from Saratoga," she said, at last, turning uneasily in her seat, annoyed at the persistency of her thoughts, "I really mean to look into this thing. I am not sure but a sense of propriety should lead one to make a profession of religion. It is, as Marion says, strange to believe as we do and not indicate it by our professions. I am not sure but the right thing for me to do would be to unite with the church. There is certainly some ground for the

thrusts that Marion has been giving. My position must seem inconsistent to her. I certainly believe these things. What harm in my saying so to everybody? Rather, is it not the right thing to do? I will unite with the church from a sense of duty, not because my feelings happen to be wrought upon by some strong excitement. I wonder just what is required of people when they join the church? A sense of their own dependence on Christ for salvation I suppose. I certainly feel that. I am not an unbeliever in any sense of the word. I respect Christian people, and always did. Mother used to be a church-member; I suppose she would be now if she were not an invalid. Most of the married ladies in our set are church-members. I don't see why it isn't quite as proper for young ladies to be. I certainly mean to give some attention to this matter just as soon as the season is over at Saratoga. In the meantime I wonder when there is a train I can get, and if I couldn't telegraph to mother to send my trunks on and have them there when I arrived."

CHAPTER XXI.

A "SENSE OF DUTY."

IT is not so easy to get away from one's self as you might think, if you never had occasion to try it. Ruth Erskine — who honestly thought herself on the high road to heaven because she had decided to offer herself for church-membership as soon as she returned from Saratoga — did not find the comfort and rest of heart that so heroic a resolution ought to have brought.

It was in vain that she endeavored to dismiss the subject and try to decide just what new costume the Saratoga trip would demand. If she could only have gotten away from the crowd of people and out of that meeting back to the quiet

of her tent, she might have succeeded in arranging her wardrobe to her satisfaction; but she was completely hedged in from any way of escape, and the inconsiderate speakers constantly made allusions that thrust the arrow further into her brain; I am not sure that it could have been said to have reached her heart.

"Who is to blame that you can not all be addressed as *workers* for Christ? Who is *your* Master? Why do you not serve him?"

These were sentences that struck in upon her just as she was deciding to have a new summer silk, trimmed with shirrings of the same material a shade darker.

"*Workers!*"

She did not know whether the speaker gave a peculiar emphasis to that word, or whether it only sounded so to her ears. Did this resolution that she had made put her among the *workers?* What was she ready to do? Teach in the Sabbath-school? Involuntarily she shrugged her shoulders; she did not like children; tract distributing, too, was hateful work, and out of style she had heard some one say. What wonderful work was to be done? She was sure *she* didn't

know. Sewing certainly wasn't in her line; she couldn't make clothes for the poor; but, then, she could give money to buy them with. Oh, yes, she was perfectly willing to do that. And then she tried to determine whether it would be well to get a new black grenadine, or whether a black silk would suit her better. She had got it trimmed with four rows of knife pleating, headed with puffs, when she was suddenly returned to the meeting.

Somebody was telling a story; she had not been giving sufficient attention to know who the speaker was, but he told his story remarkably well. It must have been about a miserable little street boy who was sick, and another miserable street boy seemed to be visiting him.

This was where her ears took it up:

"It was up a ricketty pair of stairs, and another, and another, to a filthy garret. There lay the sick boy burning with a fever, mother and father both drunk, and no one to do anything or care anything for the boy who was fighting with death. 'Ben,' said his dirty-faced visitor, bending over him, 'you're pretty bad ain't you? Ben, do you ever pray?' 'No,' says Ben, turn-

ing fevered eyes on the questioner: 'I don't know what that is.' 'Did you know there was a man once named Jesus Christ? He come to this world on purpose to save people who are going to die. Did you ever be told about him?' 'No; who is he?' 'Why, he is God; you have to believe on him.' 'I don't know what you mean.' 'Why, ask him to save you. When you die you ask him to take you and save you. I heard about him at school.' 'Will he do it?' 'Yes, he will *sure*. Them says so as have tried him.' Silence in the garret, Ben with his face turned to the wall the fever growing less, the pulse growing fainter; suddenly he turns back. 'I've asked him,' he said; 'I've asked him, and he said he would.'"

Ruth looked about her nervously. People were weeping softly all around her. Marion brushed two great tears from her glowing cheeks, and Ruth, with her heart beating with such a quickened motion that it made her faint, wondered what was the matter with every one, and wished this dreadful meeting was over, or that she had gone to Saratoga on Saturday.

It was hard to go back to the puffs on that

grenadine dress in the midst of all this, but with a resolute struggle she threw herself back into an argument as to whether she would stop on her way to make purchases, or run down to Albany as soon as she was comfortably settled at her hotel. Mr. Bliss was the next one who roused her.

You have never heard him sing? Then I am sorry for you. How can I tell you anything about it? You should hear Ruth tell it! How his voice rolled out and up from under those grand old trees; how distinctly every word fell on your ear, as distinctly as though you and he had been together in a little room alone, and he had sung it for you.

"This loving Savior stands patiently —
Though oft rejected,
Calls again for thee.
Calling now for thee, prodigal,
Calling now for thee;
Thou hast wandered far away,
But he's calling now for thee."

What *was* the matter with everybody? Was this an army of prodigals who had gathered un-

der the trees this Sabbath afternoon? Turn where she would they were wiping away the tears; she felt herself as if she could hardly keep back her own; and yet why should she weep? What had that song to do with her? *She* certainly was not a prodigal; she had never wandered, for she had never professed to be a Christian.

What strange logic, that because I have never owned my Father's love and care, therefore I am not a wanderer from him!

Ruth did not understand it; she felt almost provoked; had she not decided this very afternoon and for the first time in her life that it was fitting and eminently the proper thing to do to unite with the church, and had she not determined upon doing it just as soon as the season was over? What more could she do? Why could she not now have a little peace? If this was the "comfort" and "rest" that the Christians at Chautauqua had been talking about for a week, she was sure the less she had of them the better, for she never felt so uncomfortable in her life. Nevertheless, she adhered to her resolution.

So settled was she that it was the next proper thing to do that she staid at home from the meeting that evening to write a letter to Mr. Wayne, the gentleman who you will perhaps remember, accompanied the girls to the depot on the morning of their departure, and expressed his disgust with the whole plan.

As this is the first *religious* letter Miss Ruth Erskine ever wrote, you shall be gratified with a copy of it:

"DEAR HAROLD:

I am alone in the tent this evening — the girls have all gone to meeting; but I, finding it exhaustive, not to say tiresome, to be so constantly listening to sermons, have staid at home to write to you. I have something to tell you which I know will please you. I am going to start for Saratoga to-morrow morning. I think I shall take the 10:50 train. Now don't you make up your mind to laugh at me and say that I have grown tired of Chautauqua sooner than any of the rest. It is true enough.

"You know my mode of life and my enjoyments are necessarily very different from Eurie's and

Marion's. Those two naturally look upon this place as an escape from every-day drudgery; in short, as an economical place in which to enjoy a vacation and see a good deal of first-class society; for there are a great many first-class people here, there is no denying that. Not many from our set, you know, but a great many celebreties in the literary world that it is really very pleasant to see.

"I am not sorry that I came; if for nothing else I am glad to have come on the girls' account; they would hardly have ventured without me, and it is a real treat to them.

"You will wonder what has become of poor little Flossy, and want to know whether she is going to follow me to Saratoga as usual, but the little sprite refuses to go! I fancy Marion has been teasing her; you know she is very susceptible to ridicule, and it suits Marion's fancy to amuse herself at the expense of those people who weary of Chautauqua. She has attempted something of the kind on me, but, of course I am indifferent to any such shafts, having been in the habit of leading, rather than following, all my life. It seems natural, I suppose, to do so still.

I think well of Chautauqua. It is a good place for people to come who have not much money to spend, and who like to be in a pleasant place among pleasant people; and who enjoy fine music, and fine lectures, and all that sort of thing, and are so trammelled by work and small means at home that they cannot cultivate these tastes. But, of course, all these things are no treat to *me*, and I do not hesitate to tell you that I am bored. There is too much preaching to suit my fancy — not real preaching, either, for we haven't had what you could call a sermon until to-day, but *lectures*, which constantly bring the same theme before you.

"Now you are not to conclude from this that I do not believe in preaching, and Sunday, and all that sort of thing; on the contrary, I believe more fully in them all than I did before I came. In fact I have this very afternoon come to a determination which may surprise you, and which is partly the occasion of my writing this letter, in order that you may know at once what to expect. Harold, as soon as the season is over, and I get back home, I am going to unite with the church? Have I astonished you! I am going

to do this from a conviction of duty. You need not imagine that I have been wrought up to such a pitch of excitement that I don't know what I am about. I assure you there is nothing of the kind. I have simply concluded that it is an eminently proper thing to do. So long as I believe fully in the church and in religion, and wish to sustain both by my money and my influence, why should I not say so? That is a very simple and altogether proper way of saying it, and saves a good deal of troublesome explanation. I wonder that I haven't thought of it before.

"I do not mind telling you that it was some remarks of Marion's that first suggested the propriety of this thing to me. You know she is an infidel and I am not; and she intimated what is true enough, that I lived exactly as though I thought just as she did; so in thinking it over I concluded it was true, and that my influence ought to be with the church in this matter. Now you know, Harold, that with me to decide is to do; so this is as good as done. I should like it very well if you choose to come to the same con-

clusion and unite at the same time that I do. I am sure Dr. Dennis would be gratified. I don't know why we shouldn't be willing to have it known where we stand; and I know you respect the church and trust her as well as I do myself.

"I told Marion to-day "I did not see how a person with brains could be an infidel," or something to that effect — and I *don't*. I think that is such a silly view to take of life. Just as if everything *could* come by chance! And if God did not make everything, who did? I have no patience with that sort of thing, and I am glad to remember that you have no such tastes.

"By the way, are the Arnotts in Saratoga? I hope not, for they are such fanatics there is no comfort in meeting them, and yet one has to be civil.

"Seems to me you do not enjoy the opera as well as usual, nor the hops either. What is the matter? Do you really miss me? If there is any such foolish fancy in your heart as that, prepare to enjoy yourself next week, for I shall be with you at every one of them after Tuesday. It will take me until then to get something decent to wear.

"I hear the girls coming up the hill, and I must leave you.

"*Au revoir*,

"RUTH."

Folding and addressing this epistle with a satisfied air, and still full of the spirit which had prompted her to write a *religious* letter, Ruth, finding that Marion had come in alone, and that Flossy and Eurie were still loitering up the hill, gave herself the satisfaction of communicating her change of views.

"I have been thinking a good deal about what you said this afternoon, Marion, and there is truth in it. I do not think as you do, and I ought to take some measures to let people know it. I have the most perfect respect for and confidence in religion, and I mean to prove it by uniting with the church. I have decided to attend to that matter as soon as I get home again after the season is over. I am surprised at myself for not doing so before, for I certainly consider it eminently proper, in fact a duty."

Now, it was very provoking to have so religious a sentence as this received in the manner that it was. Marion tilted her stool back against

the bed, and gave herself up to the luxury of a ringing laugh.

"Really," Ruth said, "you have returned from church in a very hilarious mood; something very funny must have happened; it can not be that anything in my sentence had to do with your amusement."

"Yes, but it has," squealed Marion, holding her sides and laughing still. "Oh, Ruthie, Ruthie, you will be the death of me! And so you think that this is religion! You honestly suppose that standing up in church and having your name read off constitutes Christianity! Don't do it, Ruthie; you have never been a hypocrite, and I have always honored you because you were not. If this is all the religion you can find, go without it forever and ever, for I tell you there is not a single bit in it."

Her laughter had utterly ceased, and her voice was solemn in its intensity.

"I don't know what you mean in the least," Ruth said, testily. "You are talking about something of which you know nothing."

"So are you. Oh, Ruthie, so are you! Yes, I know something about it; I know that you

haven't reached the A, B, C, of it. Why, Ruthie do you remember that story this afternoon? Do you remember that little boy in the garret, how he turned his face to the wall and asked God to save him? Have you done that? Do you honestly think that *you*, Ruth Erskine, have anything to be saved from? Don't you know the little fellow said, '*He answered.*' Has He answered you? Why, Ruth, do you never listen to the church covenant? How does it read: 'That it is eminently fit and proper for those who believe that God made them to join the church?' Ruth Erskine, you can never take more solemn vows upon you than you will have to take if you unite with the church, and I beg you not to do it. I tell you it means more than that. I had a father who was a member of the church, and he prayed — oh, how he prayed! He was the best man who ever lived on earth! Every one knew he was good; every one thought he was a saint; and it seems to me as though I could never love any God who did not give him a happier lot than he had as a reward for his holy life. But do you think he thought himself good? I tell you he felt that no one could be

more weak and sinful and in need of saving than he was. Oh, I know the people who make up churches have more than this in them. *I* think it is all a deception, but it is a blessed one to have. I know these people at Chautauqua have it, hundreds of them. I see the same look in their faces that my father had in his, and if I could only get the same delusion into my heart I would hug it for my blessed father's sake; but don't you ever go into the church and subscribe to these things that they will ask of you until you have felt the same need of help and the same sense of being helped that they have. If you do, and there is a God, I would rather stand my chance with him than to have yours."

And Marion seized her hat and rushed out into the night, leaving Ruth utterly dumbfounded.

CHAPTER XXII.

ONE MINUTE'S WORK.

MARION struck out into the darkness, caring little which way she went; she had rarely been so wrought upon; her veins seemed to glow with fire. What difference did it make? she asked herself. If there was nothing at all in it, why not let Ruth amuse herself by joining the church and playing at religion? It would add to her sense of dignity, and who would be hurt by it?

There was a difficulty in the way. Turn where she would, it confronted Marion during these days. There was a solemn haunting "if" that would not be put down. What *if* all these things were true? She by no means felt so as-

sured as she had once done; indeed, the foundations for her disbelief seemed to have been shaken from under her during the last week.

Remember, she had never spent a week with Christians before in her life; not, at least, a week during which she was made to realize all the time that they were Christians; that they stood on a different platform from herself.

Now, as she tramped about through the darkening woods, meeting constantly groups of people on their way home from the meeting, hearing from them snatches of what had been said and sung, she suddenly paused, and so vivid was the impression that for long afterward she could not think of it without feeling that a voice must certainly have spoken the words in her ear. Yet she recognized them as a sentence which had struck her from Dr. Pierce's sermon in the morning.

"God honors his gospel, even though preached by a bad man; honors it sometimes to the saving of a soul. But think of a meeting between the two! the sinner saved and the sinner lost, who was the means of the other's salvation." It had thrilled Marion at the time, with her old

questioning thrill: What if such a thing were possible! Now it came again.

She stood perfectly still, all the blood seeming to recede from and leave her faint with the strange solemnity of the thought! What if she had this evening been preaching the gospel to Ruth! What if the words of hers should lead Ruth to think, and to hunt, and to find this light that those who were not blind — if there were any such — succeeded in finding! What if, as a result of this, she should go to heaven! and what if it were true that there was to be a judgment, and they two should meet, and then and there she should realize that it was because of this evening's talk that Ruth stood in glory on the other side of the great gulf of separation! What kind of a feeling would that be?

"Oh, if I only knew," she said aloud, sitting suddenly down on a fallen log, "if I *only* knew that any of these things were so! or if I could only get to imagining that they were, I would take them up and have the comfort out of them that some of these people seem to get, for I have so little comfort in my life. It can not be that it is all a farce, such as Ruth's horrid resolve

would lead one to think; that is not the way that Dr. Vincent feels about it; it is not the way that Dr. Pierce preached about it this morning; it is not the way that man Bliss sings about it. There is more to it than that. My father had more than that. If he could only look down to-night and tell me whether it is so, whether he is safe and well and perfectly happy. Oh, it seems to me if I could only be sure, *sure* beyond a doubt that God did give an eternal heaven to my father, I could love him forever for doing that, even though there is a hell and I go to it."

Within the tent they were having talk that would seem to amount to very little. Even Eurie appeared to be subdued, and to have almost nothing to say. Ruth was roused from the half stupor of astonishment into which Marion's unexpected words had thrown her by hearing Flossy say, "Oh, Ruth, I forgot to tell you something; Mrs. Smythe stopped at the door on Saturday evening before you came home; her party leave for Saratoga tomorrow morning, and she wanted to know whether any of us would go with them."

"Did you tell her I was going?" Ruth asked,

quickly. It was utterly distasteful to her to think of having Mrs. Smythe's company. She did not stop to analyze her feelings; she simply shrank from contact with Mrs. Smythe and from others who were sure to be of her stamp.

"No," Flossy said, "I did not know what you had decided upon; I said it was possible that you might want to go, but some one joined us just then and the conversation changed: I did not think of it again."

"I am glad you didn't," Ruth said, emphatically. "I don't want her society. I won't go in the morning if I am to be bored with that party; I would rather wait a week."

"They are going in the morning train," Eurie said; "I heard that tall man who sometimes leads the singing say so. He said there was quite a little party to go, among them a party from Clyde, who were *en route* for Saratoga. That is them, you know; nearly all of them are from Clyde. 'Oh, yes,' the other man said; 'we must expect that. Of course there is a froth to all these things that must evaporate toward Saratoga, or some other resort. There is a class of mind that Chautauqua is too much for.'

Think of that, Ruthie, to be considered nothing but froth that is to evaporate!"

"Nonsense!" Ruth said, sharply. She seemed to consider that an unanswerable argument, and in a sense it is. Nevertheless Eurie's words had their effect; she began to wish that letter unwritten, and to wish that she had not said so much about Saratoga, and to wish that there was some quiet way of changing her plans.

In fact, an utter distaste for Saratoga seemed suddenly to have come upon her. Conversation palled after this; Marion came in, and the four made ready for the night in almost absolute silence. The next thing that occurred was sufficiently startling in its nature to arouse them all. It was one of those sudden, careless movements that this life of ours is full of, taking only a moment of time, and involving consequences that reached away beyond time, and death, and resurrection.

"Eurie," Ruth had said, "where is your headache bottle that you boast so much of? I believe I am going to have a sick headache."

"In my satchel," Eurie answered, sleepily. She was already in bed. "There is a spoon on that box in the corner: take a tea-spoonful."

Another minute of silence, then Eurie suddenly raised her head from the pillow and looked about her wildly. The dim light of the lamp showed Ruth, slowly pulling the pins from her hair.

"Did you take it?" she asked, and her voice was full of eager, intense fright. "Ruth, you didn't *take* it!"

"Yes, I did, of course. What is the matter with you?"

"It was the wrong bottle. It was the liniment bottle in my satchel. I forgot. Oh, Ruth, Ruth, what will we do? It is a deadly poison."

Then to have realized the scene that followed you should have been there to see. Ruth gave one loud shriek that seemed to re-echo through the trees, and Eurie's moan was hardly less terrible. Marion sprang out of bed, and was alert and alive in a moment.

"Ruth, lie down; Eurie, stop groaning and act. What was it? Tell me this instant."

"Oh, I don't *know* what it was, only he said that ten drops would kill a person, and she took a tea-spoonful."

"I know where the doctor's cottage is," said

Flossy, dressing rapidly. "I can go for him.' And almost as soon as the words were spoken she had slipped out into the darkness.

Ruth had obeyed the imperative command of Marion and laid herself on the bed. She was deadly pale, and Eurie, who felt eagerly for her pulse, felt in vain. Whether it was gone, or whether her excitement was too great to find it, she did not know. Meantime, Marion fumbled in Flossy's trunk and came toward them with a bottle.

"Hold the light, Eurie; this is Flossy's hair-oil. I happen to know that it is harmless, and oil is an antidote for half the poisons in the world. Ruth, swallow this and keep up courage; we will save you."

Down went the horrid spoonful, and Marion was eagerly at work chafing her limbs and rubbing her hands, hurrying Eurie meantime who had started for the hotel in search of help and hot water.

That dreadful fifteen minutes! Not one of them but that thought it was hours. They never forgot the time when they fought so courageously, and yet so hopelessly, with death

Ruth did not seem to grow worse, but she looked ghastly enough for death to have claimed her for his victim; and Flossy did not return. Eurie came back to report a fire made and water heating, and seizing a pail was about to start again, when her eye caught the open satchel, and a bottle quietly reposing there, closely corked and tied over the top with a bit of kid; she gave a scream as loud as the first had been.

"What *is* the matter now?" Marion said. "Eurie, do have a little common sense."

"She didn't take it!" burst forth Eurie. "It is all a mistake. It *was* the right bottle. Here is the other, corked, just as I put it."

Before this sentence was half concluded Ruth was sitting up in bed, and Marion, utterly overcome by this sudden revulsion of feeling, was crying hysterically. There is no use in trying to picture the rest of that excitement. Suffice it to say that the events of the next hour are not likely to be forgotton by those who were connected with them. Eurie came back to her senses first, and met and explained to the people who had heard the alarm, and were eagerly

gathering with offers of help. There was much talk, and many exclamations of thankfulness and much laughter, and at last everything was growing quiet again.

"I can not find the doctor," Flossy had reported in despair. "He has gone to Mayville, but Mr. Roberts will be here in a minute with a remedy, and he is going right over to Mayville for the doctor."

"Don't let him, I beg," said Marion, who was herself again. "There is nothing more formidable than a spoonful of your hair-oil. I don't know but the poor child needs an emetic to get rid of that. Eurie, my dear, can't you impress it on those dear people that we *don't want* any hot water? I hear the fourth pail coming."

It was midnight before this excited group settled down into anything like quiet. But the strain had been so great, and the relief so complete, that a sleep so heavy that it was almost a stupor at last held the tired workers.

Now, what of it all? Why did this foolish mistake of bottles, which might have been a tragedy, and was nothing but a causeless excitement, reach so far with its results?

Let me tell you of one to whom sleep did not come. That was the one who but half an hour before had believed herself face to face with death! What mattered it to her that it was a mistake, and death no nearer to her, so far as she knew, than to the rest of the sleeping world?

Death was not annihilated — he was only held at bay. She knew that he *would* come, and that there would be no slipping away when his hand actually grasped hers. She believed in death; she had supposed herself being drawn into his remorseless grasp. To her the experience, so far as it had led her, was just as real as though there had been no mistake.

And the result? *She had been afraid!* All her proper resolutions, so fresh in her mind, made only that very afternoon, had been of no more help to her than so much foam. She had not so much as remembered in her hour of terror whether there *was* a church to join. But that there was a God, and a judgment, and a Savior, who was not hers, had been as real and vivid as she thinks it ever can be, even when she stands on the very brink.

Oh, that long night of agony! when she tossed and turned and sought in vain for an hour of rest. She was afraid to sleep. How like death this sleeping was! Who could know, when they gave themselves up to the grasp of this power, that he was not the very death angel himself in disguise, and would give them no earthly awakening forever?

What should she do? Believe in religion? Yes. She knew it was true. What then? What had Marion said? Was that all true? Aye, verily it was; she knew that, too. Had she not stood side by side with death?

The hours went by and the conflict went on. There was a conflict. Her conscience knew much more than her tongue had given it credit for knowing that afternoon. Oh, she had seen Christians who had done more than join the church! She had imagined that that act might have a mysterious and gradual change on her tastes and feelings, so that some time in her life, when she was old, and the seasons for her were over, she might feel differently about a good many things.

But that hour of waiting for the messenger of

death, who, she thought, had called her, had swept away this film. "It is not teaching in Sunday-school," said her brain. "It is not tract distributing; it is not sewing societies for the poor; it is not giving or going. It is *none* of these things, or *any* of them, or *all* of them, as the case may be, and as they come afterward. But *first* it is this question: Am I my own mistress? do I belong to myself or to God? will I do as I please or as he pleases? will I submit my soul to him, and ask him to keep it and to show me what to do, or when and where to step?"

The night was utterly spent, and the gray dawn of the early sweet summer morning was breaking into the grove, and still Ruth lay with wide-open eyes, and thought. A struggle? Oh dear, yes! Such an one as she had never imagined. That strong will of hers, which had led not only herself but others, yield it, submit to other leadership, always to question, Is this right? can I go here? ought I to say that? What a thing to do! But it involved that; she knew it, felt it. She might have been blind during the week past, but she was not deaf.

How they surged over her, the sentences from

one and another to whom she had listened! They were not at play, these great men. What did it mean but that there was a life hidden away, belonging to Christ? She felt no love in her heart, no longing for love, such as poor little Flossy had yearned for. She felt instead that she was equal to life; that the world was sufficient for her; that she wanted the world; but that the world was at conflict with God, and that she belonged to God, and that she *should* give herself utterly into his hands.

Moreover, she knew there was coming a time when the world, and Saratoga, and the season, with its pleasures, would not do. There was grim death! — he would come. She could not always get away. He was coming every hour for somebody around her. She must — yes, she *must* get ready for him. It would not do to be surprised again as she had been surprised last night. It was not becoming in Ruth Erskine to live so that the sound of death could palsy her limbs and blanch her cheek and make her shudder with fear. She must get where she could say calmly: "Oh, are *you* here? Well, I am ready."

It was just as the sun which was rising in glory forced its smiles in between the thick leaves of the Chautauqua birds' nests, and set all the little birds in a twitter of delight, that Ruth raised herself on her elbow and said aloud, and with the force that comes from a determined will that has decided something in which there has been a struggle:

"I *will* do it."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"I'VE BEEN REDEEMED."

"WHAT about Saratoga?" was Eurie's first query as she awoke to life and talk again on that summer morning. "Do you think you will take the 10:50 train, Ruth?"

Ruth gave nothing more decided than a wan smile in answer, and in her heart a wonder as to what Eurie would think of her if she could have known the way in which her night was passed.

"She is more likely to stay in bed," Marion said, looking at her critically. "You will never think of trying to travel to-day, will you, Ruth? Dear me! how you look! I have always heard that hair oil was weakening, but I did not know

its effects were so sudden and disastrous!" And then every one of these silly girls laughed. The disaster of the night before had reached its irresistibly comic side — to them. Only Ruth shivered visibly; it was not funny to her.

It was a very eventful day. She by no means relished the character of invalid that the girls seemed determined ought to be forced upon her and at the same time she had not the least idea of going to Saratoga. Strangely enough, that desire seemed to have utterly gone from her She had not slept at all, but she arose and dressed herself as usual, with only one feeling strong upon her, and that was a determination to carry out the decision to which she had so recently come, and she had not the least idea how to set to work to carry it out. She went with the rest to the large tent to hear Mrs. Clark's address to primary class teachers.

"I'm not a primary class teacher, and not likely to be, but I am a woman, and gifted with the natural curiosity of that sex to know what a woman may have to say in so big a place as this. I don't see how she dares to peep." This was Eurie's explanation of her desire to go to the reception.

Ruth went because to go to meeting seemed to be the wisest way that she knew of for carrying out her decision; and a good time she had. She had not imagined that teaching primary classes was such an art, and involved so much time and brain as it did. She listened eagerly to all Mrs. Clark had to say; she followed her through the blackboard lessons with surprise and delight, and she awoke at the close of the hour to the memory that, although she had been interested as she had not imagined it possible for her to be on such a theme, she had done nothing toward her determination to make a Christian of herself, and that she knew no more how to go to work than before.

"When I *do* find out how to be one I know I will go to work in the Sabbath-school; I have changed my mind on that point." This she told herself softly as they went back to dinner.

It was a strange afternoon to her. She became unable to interest herself heartily in the public services; her own heart claimed her thought. It was noticeable also that for the first time Chautauqua chose this day in which to be metaphysical and scientific, to the exclusion of

personal religion. Not that they were irreligious, not that they for a moment forgot their position as a great religious gathering; but there was an absence of that intense personal element in the talk which had so offended Ruth's taste heretofore, and she missed it.

She wandered aimlessly up and down the aisles, listening to sentences now and then, and sighing a little. They were eloquent, they were helpful; she could imagine herself as being in a state to enjoy them heartily, but just now she wanted nothing so much as to know what to do in order to give herself a right to membership with that great religious world. Why should Chautauqua suddenly desert her now when she so much needed its help?

"If I knew a single one of these Christian people I would certainly ask them what to do." This she said talking still to herself. She had come quite away from the meeting, and was down in one of the rustic seats by the lake side. It struck her as very strange that she had not intimate acquaintance with a single Christian. She even traveled home and tried to imagine herself in conversation on this subject with some

of her friends. To whom could she go? Mr. Wayne? Why, he wouldn't understand her in the least. What a strange letter that was which she wrote him! Could it be possible that it was written only yesterday? How strange that she should have suggested to him to unite with the church! How strange that she should have thought of it herself!

There came a quick step behind her, and a voice said, "Good-evening, Miss Erskine." She turned and tried to recall the name that belonged to the face of the young man before her.

"You do not remember me?" he said, inquiringly. "I was of the party who went to Jamestown on the excursion."

"Oh, Mr. Flint," she said, smiling, and holding out her hand. "I beg pardon for forgetting; that seems about a month ago."

"So it does to me; we live fast here. Miss Erskine, I have been looking for your party; I couldn't find them. Isn't Miss Shipley in your tent? Yes, I thought so. Well, I want to see her very much. I have something to tell her that I know will give her pleasure. Perhaps you would take a message for me. I want her to

know that since last week, when she told me of her Friend who had become so dear to her, I have found the truth of it. He is my Friend now, and I want to thank her for so impressing me with a desire to know him that I could not give it up."

Ruth looked utterly puzzled. Something in the young man's reverent tone, when he used the word "Friend," suggested that he could mean only the Friend for whom she herself was in looking; and yet — Flossy Shipley! What had *she* to do with him?

"Do you mean," she said, hesitatingly, and yet eagerly, for if he indeed meant that here was one for whom she had been looking; "do you mean that you have become a Christian?"

"It is such a new experience," he said, his face flushing, "that I have hardly dared to call myself by that name; but if to be a Christian means to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and to have given one's self, body and soul, to his service, why then I am assuredly a Christian."

This was it. There was no time to be lost. She had spent one night of horror, she could not endure another, and the day was drawing to its

end. To be sure she felt no terror now, but the night might bring it back.

"How did you do it?" she asked, simply. "How?" The very simplicity of the question puzzled him. "Why, I just gave myself up to his keeping; I resolved to take a new road and follow only where he led. Miss Shipley was the one who first made me think seriously about this matter; and then I went to the service that evening, and everything that was said and sung, was said and sung right at me. I was just forced into the belief that I had been a fool, and I wanted to be something else."

"Miss Shipley!" Ruth said, brought back by that name to the wonderment. "You are mistaken. You can not mean Flossy. She isn't a Christian at all. She never so much as thinks of such things."

"Oh, *you* are mistaken." He said it eagerly and positively. "On the contrary, she is the most earnest and straightforward little Christian that I ever met in my life. Why, I never had anything so come to my soul as that little sentence that she said about having found a '*Friend.*' I know it is the same one. I have seen her with

you since, but not near enough to address. Her name *is* Flossy; I heard her called so that day on the boat."

"Flossy!" Ruth said it again, in a bewildering tone, and rising as she spoke. "I am going to find her; I want to understand this mystery. I will give her your message, Mr. Flint, but I think there is a mistake." Saying which she bade him a hasty good-afternoon, for the flutter of a scarlet shawl had reached her eyes. No one but Flossy wore such a wrap as that. She wanted to see her at once, and she *didn't* want Mr. Charlie Flint to be along. She went forward with rapid steps to meet her, and slipping an arm within hers, they turned and went slowly back over the mossy path.

"Flossy, I want you to tell me something. I have heard something so strange; I think it is not so, but you can tell me. I want to know if you think you are a Christian?"

I wonder if Flossy has any idea, even now, how strangely Ruth's heart beat as she asked that simple question. It seemed to involve a great deal to her. She waited for the answer.

There was no hesitation and no indecision

about Flossy's answer. Her cheeks took a pink tint, but her voice was clear.

"I *know* I am, Ruth. I do not even have to speak with hesitancy. I am so sure that Christ is my Friend, and I grow so much surer of it every day, that I can not doubt it any more than I can doubt that I am walking down this path with you."

And then, again, Ruth's astonishment was in part lost in that absorbing question:

"How did you get to be one?"

"It is a simple little story," Flossy said. And then she began at the beginning and told her little bit of experience, fresh in her heart, dating only a few days back, and full to the brim with peace and gladness to her.

"But I don't see," Ruth said, perplexed. "I don't find out what to *do*. I want to be told how to do it, and none of you tell me; you seem to have just resolved about it, and not *done* anything. I have gone so far myself. Such a night as last night was, Flossy! Oh, you can never imagine it!"

And then she told her story, as much of it as *could* be told; of the horror and the thick dark-

ness that had enveloped her she could only hint.

What an eager flash there was in Flossy's bright eyes as she listened.

"When you said that!" she began, eagerly, as Ruth paused. "When you said, 'I *will* do it.' What then? Did you feel just as you did before?"

"No," Ruth said, "not at all. The night had gone by that time. As I looked about me I realized that it was daylight, and I fancied that my feelings were the result of a highly excited state of nerves. But the resolve was not to be accounted for in any such way. I meant that. The horror, though, of which I had been telling you was quite gone. It was as if there had been a fearful storm, with the constant roll of thunder, and suddenly a calm. I hadn't the least feeling of fear or dread, and I haven't had all day; but to-night I may have the very same experience."

"No, you will not," Flossy said, her voice aglow with feeling and with joy. "Oh, Ruthie, Ruthie! There *is* no night! You have got beyond it. I tell you, you have come into God's light! And isn't it blessed? You are a Christian now."

"But," protested Ruth, utterly bewildered, "I do not understand you, and I don't think you understand yourself. In what way am I different from what I was yesterday? How can I be lost in God's sight one moment and accepted the next?"

"Easily; oh, *so* easily! Don't you see? Why, if I had been coaxing you for a year to give me something, and you had steadily refused, but if suddenly you had said to me, 'Yes. I will; I have changed my mind; I will give it to you,' wouldn't there be a difference? Wouldn't I know that I was to have it? And couldn't I thank you then, and tell you how glad I was, just the same as though I had it in my hand? It is a poor little illustration, Ruthie, but it is true that God has been calling you all your life, and if you have all the time been saying 'No,' up to that moment when you said solemnly, meaning it with all your heart, 'I will,' I tell you it makes a difference."

I can not describe to you how strangely all this sounded to Ruthie. Up to this moment she had not realized in the least that the Lord was asking her simply for a decision, and that hav-

ing solemnly given it, the work, so far as *she* was concerned, was done, and the new relations instantly commenced. She thought it over — that sudden calming of heart — that sense of resolve — of determination, so strong, and yet so quiet. She remembered what a strange day it had been. How she had tried to keep before her mind the horror of the night, and had not been able.

She went on talking with Flossy, telling her about Charlie Flint, noticing the happy tears that glistened in Flossy's eyes as she received her message, taking in the murmured words, "To think that Christ would honor such a feeble little witnessing as that!" and realizing even then that it would be very blessed to have one say to her, "You have been the means of leading me to think about this thing." Why should *she* care, though, whether people thought about this thing or not? Yesterday she didn't. During all the talk she kept up this little undertone of thought, this running commentary on her sudden change of views and feelings, and wondered, and *wondered*, could it be possible that she was utterly changed? And yet, when she came to think of it, wasn't she? Didn't she love Christ?

And then it struck her as the strangest thing in the world *not* to love him. How could any one be so devoid of heart as that? Why, a mere man, to have done one-half of what Christ had done for her, would have received undying love and service.

As they walked they neared the stand, and there came just at that moment a burst of music, one of those strange, thrilling tunes such as none but the African race ever sing. The words were familiar, and yet to Ruth they were new:

"There is a fountain filled will blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

A sinner! Was *she*, Ruth Erskine, a sinner? Yesterday she had not liked it to be called a prodigal. But to-day, oh yes. Was there a greater sinner to be found than she? How long she had known this story! How long she had known and believed of a certainty that Jesus Christ lived and died that she might have salvation, and yet she had never in her life thanked him for it! Nay, she had spurned and scorned

his gift! So much worse than though she had not believed it at all! For then at least she could not have been said to have met him with the insult of indifference.

Then the chorus swelled out on the still air. Only those who heard it under the trees at Chautauqua have the least idea how it sounded; only those who hear it, as Ruth Erskine did, can have the least idea how it sounded to her.

"I've been redeemed, I've been redeemed!"

Over and over the strain repeated. Now in clear soprano tones, and anon rolled out from the grand bass voices. And then the swelling unison:

"I've been redeemed—
Been washed in the blood of the Lamb."

The girls had stopped, and almost held their breaths to listen. They stood in silence while verse after verse with its triumphant swell of chorus rolled out to them. The great tears gathered slowly in Ruth's eyes, until, as the last echo died away, she turned to Flossy, and her voice was clear and triumphant:

"I believe I *have*. Flossy, I believe I have. It is a glorious thought, and a wonderful one. It almost frightens me. And yet it thrills me with perfect delight. The fountain is deep enough for us all — for them and for me. I have "been redeemed," and if God will help me I will never forget it again."

CHAPTER XXIV.

SWORD-THRUSTS.

BY the next morning it became clear to our girls that a change of programme was a necessity. Ruth had by no means recovered from her shock and the sleepless night that followed, and some of the comforts of invalidism must be found for her. At the same time she utterly repudiated the idea of Saratoga, which was now urged upon her; it had lost its charms; neither would she go home.

"I have decided to stay until the *very* last meeting," she said, with quiet determination.

Flossy laughed softly; she knew what charms Chautauqua had taken on, but the others supposed it to be a whim, resulting from the ridicule she had suffered because of the Saratoga scheme.

After many plans were discussed it was finally decided that Flossy and Ruth should seek quarters at the hotel in Mayville, Ruth coming over to the meetings only when her strength and her fancy dictated, and having some of the luxuries of home about her. It seemed to fall naturally to Flossy's lot to accompany her; indeed, a barrier was in the way of either of the others being chosen. The hotel arrangement, when one took into consideration the numerous boat-rides to and from the ground, was by no means an economical proceeding, and as Flossy and Ruth were the only ones who were entirely indifferent to the demands of their purses, it must of necessity be them.

Neither of them was disposed to demur; there had never been much congeniality between these two, but they had been friendly, and now there was a subtle bond of sympathy which made them long to be together. So, during the next morning hours, those two were engaged in packing

their effects and preparing for a flitting to the Mayville House. Meantime Marion and Eurie, having stood around and looked on until they were tired, departed in search of something to interest them.

"It is too early for meeting," Marion said. "There is nothing of interest until 11 o'clock. I'm sorry we missed Mrs. Clark. I like to look at her and listen to her; she is just bubbling over with enthusiasm. One can see that she thinks she means it. If I were a Sunday-school teacher I should be glad I was here, to hear her. I think it has been about the most helpful thing I have heard thus far; helpful to those who indulge in that sort of work, I mean."

"I wonder what those normal classes are like?" Eurie said, studying her programme. "We haven't been to one of those, have we? What do you suppose they do?"

Marion shrugged her shoulders.

"They are like work," she said. "'Working hours,' they are named; and I suppose some hard thinking is done. If I didn't have to teach school six hours out of every day at home I might be tempted to go in and listen to them;

but I came here to play, you see, and to make money; they are not good to report about. People who stay at home and read the reported letters don't want to hear anything about the actual *work*; they want to know who the speaker was and how he looked, and whether his gestures were graceful, and — if it is a lady — above all, how she was dressed; if they say anything remarkably sarcastic or irresistibly funny you may venture to report it, but not otherwise, consequently reporting is easy work, if you have not too much conscience, because what you didn't see you can make up.

At the end of this harangue she paused suddenly before a tent, whence came the sound of a firm and distinct voice.

"What is this?" she said, and then she lifted a bit of the canvas and peeped in. "I'm going in here, after all," she said, withdrawing her head and explaining. "This is a normal class, I guess. That man from Philadelphia — what is his name? Tyler? Yes, that is it — J. Bennet Tyler — is leading. I like him; I like his voice ever so much; he makes you hear, whether you want to

or not. Then, someway, you get a kind of a notion that he not only believes what he says but that he *knows* it is so, and that is all there is about it. I like to meet such people now and then, because they are so rare. Generally people act as though you could coax them out of their notions in about twenty minutes if you tried — when they are talking about religious subjects, I mean. Obstinacy is not so rare a trait where other matters are concerned. Let's go in."

"What is the subject this morning?" Eurie asked, following her guide around to the entrance, somewhat reluctantly. She was in no mood for shutting herself inside a tent, and being obliged to listen whether she wanted to or not. But Marion was in one of her positive moods this morning, and must either be followed or deserted altogether.

Mr. Tyler was reading from a slip of paper as they entered. This was the sentence he read:

"Difficulties in interpretation which arise from certain mental peculiarities of the student. Some minds, and not by any means the strongest or

noblest, must always see the *reason* for everything."

Marion gave Eurie a sagacious nod of the head.

"Don't you see?" she said. "Now, by the peculiar way in which he read that, he made believe it was *me* he meant. And, by the way, I'm not sure but he is correct. I must say that I like a reason for things. But what right has he to say that *that* is an indication of a weak mind?"

"He didn't say so," whispered Eurie.

"Oh, yes he did; it amounted to that. There is where his peculiar use of words comes in. That man has *studied* words until he handles them as if they were foot-balls, and were to go exactly where he sent them."

"He is looking this way. The next thing you know he will throw some at us for whispering."

This was Eurie's attempt to quiet Marion's tongue. That or some other influence had the desired effect. She whispered no more, and it was apparent in a very few minutes that she had become intensely interested in the theme and in the way it was being handled. An eager examination of the programme disclosed what she be

gan to suspect, that the subject was, "Difficulties in the Bible." Her intellectual knowledge of the Bible was considerable; and having read it ever since she could remember, with the express purpose of finding difficulties, it was not surprising that she had found them.

Something, either in the leader's manner of drawing out answers, or the peculiar emphasis with which he contrived to invest certain words, had the effect to cause Marion to feel as though she had been very superficial in her reasoning and childish in her objections. She grew eager her brain, accustomed to work rapidly and follow trains of thought closely, enjoyed the keen play of thought that was being drawn forth.

But there was more than that; almost unconciously to herself this subject was assuming vital proportions to her; she did not even herself realize the intensity of the cry in her heart, "If I only *knew* whether these were so!" Presently the voice which had once before struck her as being so peculiar in its personality sounded distinctly down the long tent.

"*Remember* the conditions under which the Bible promises clear apprehension of the truth."

It chanced — at least that is the way in which we use language — it chanced that Mr. Tyler's eyes as he repeated these words rested on Marion. Speaking of it afterward she said:

"So far as the impression made on me was concerned, it was the same as though he had said: 'Do you understand what an idiot you have been not to take that cardinal point into consideration at all? Open your Bible and read, and see how like a weak-minded babe you are.' "

Beside her lay a Bible just dropped by some one who had been called out. Following out the impulse of the moment she turned to the ref erence, and her clear voice gave it distinctly:

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself."

The effect of this simple, straightforward and reasonable proposition, on sounding back to her spoken by her own voice, was tremendous. Very little more of the talk did she hear. A thrust, from God's own sword had reached her. What a fool she had been! What right had she to presume to give an opinion before applying the test? Had not the most common-place state-

ments a right to be tried by their own tests? Yet she had never given this simple direction a thought.

So this was the Bible promise? "He *shall* know." Not that these things are so, but a more logical, more satisfactory statement to the natural heart. He shall judge for himself whether these things be so; follow the directions, and then judge by your experiences after that whether these things be true or false. Could anything be more reasonable?

"I shall never dare to say that I don't believe the Bible again, for fear some one will ask me whether I have applied the test, and if I have not what business have I to judge. That man now, if I should come in contact with him, which I shall endeavor not to do, would be sure to ask me. He has almost the same as asked it now, before all these people. He has a mysterious way of making me feel as though he was talking for my confusion and for nobody else."

This Marion told to herself as she eyed the leader, half sullenly. He had strangely disturbed her logic and set her refuge in ruins.

"Let's go," she said suddenly to Eurie. "I

am tired of this; I have had enough, and more than enough." But the hour was over, and she had had all that was to be secured from that source.

All the younger portion of the congregation seemed to be rushing back up the hill again, and inquiry developed the fact that Mrs. Clark was to meet the primary workers in the large tent. It was wonderful how many people chose to consider themselves primary workers? At least they rushed to this meeting, a great army of them, as though their one object in life, was to learn how successfully to teach the little ones. Our girls all met together in the tent. Ruth and Flossy had finished their preparations, but had concluded to wait until afternoon service.

"I declare if *you* are not armed with a pencil and paper. Have you been seized with a mania for taking notes?" This Eurie said to Ruth. "Now I'm going to get out *my* note book too. Here is a card — it will hold all I care to write I dare say. Let me see, who knows but I shall go to teaching in Sabbath-school one of these days! I am going to make a list of the things which according to Mrs. Clark, we shall need."

True to her new fancy, she scribbled industriously during the session, and showed her card with glee as they left the tent.

"I've a complete list," she said. "If any of you go into the business I can supply you with the names of the necessary tools. Look!

"A blackboard.

"A picture roll.

"A punch!

"Cards.

"Brains!

"Blank book.

"Children.

"More brains!

"That last item," she said, reflectively, "is the hardest to find. I had no idea so much of that material was necessary. Now let me see what is on your papers." This even Marion stoutly resisted. And Flossy quietly hid hers in her pocket, saying with a smile:

"Mine is simply a list of things needful for such work."

If she had shown her paper it would have astonished Eurie, and it might have done her good. This was what she had written:

"What I need in order to be a successful teacher.

"Such a forgetfullness of self as shall lead me to think only of the little ones and their needs.

"Such a love for Christ as shall lead me to long after every little soul to lead it to him."

As for Marion her paper contained simply this sentence, carefully written out in German text as if she had deliberated over each letter;

"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

They went in a body to hear Dr. Hatfield.

"I want that lecture," Marion said, "'Perils of the Hour.' I'm very anxious to know what my peril is. I know just what is hovering over every one of you, but I can't quite make up my mind as to my own state. Perhaps the distinguished gentleman can help me."

And he did. He had selected for one of the perils that which was embodied in the following ringing sentence:

"The third peril is the prevelancy of skepticism. A class of scientists have discovered that there is no God! What the fool said in his *heart* they proclaimed on the house-top!"

Eurie looked over at her, smiling and mischievous, and said in anything but a softly whisper, "That means you, my dear."

But Marion did not hear her; she was absorbed in the intense scathing sentences that followed. Of one thing she presently felt assured, that whoever was right or whoever was wrong in this matter, Dr. Hatfield believed with all the intensity of an intense educated intellect that God ruled. Was it probable that he had met the condition, done his will, and so *knew* of the doctrine? That was an hour to be remembered. Eurie ceased to whisper or to frolic; there was too much intensity, about the speaker's manner not to claim her attention. She listened as she was not in the habit of listening. She could give you a detailed account even now of that hour of thought; so could I, and I am awfully tempted; but, you see, it is only Tuesday, and the girls have six more days to spend at Chautauqua.

Both Ruth and Flossy got their crumb to think over. They discussed it at the hotel that evening.

"I tell you, Flossy, if Dr. Hatfield is correct

you and I have tremendous changes to make in our way of spending the Sabbath; and I have actually prided myself on the way in which I respected the day!"

And Ruth laughed as if that were so strange a thought, now that it was hardly possible to think that she could have entertained it.

"I know," Flossy said; "and he can not but be right, for he proved his position. I am glad I heard that address. But for him, I know I should never have thought of my influence in some places where I now see I can use it. Ruth you will be struck with one thing. Now, Chautauqua is like what Madame C's school might have been, so far as study is concerned. Every day I have a new lesson, one that startles me so! I feel that there must be some mistake, or I would have heard of or thought of some of these things before. And yet they sound so reasonable when you come to think them over, that presently I am surprised that I have not felt them before. Ruthie, do you think Eurie and Marion have any interest at all?"

"No," said Ruth, positively, "I know Marion

hasn't. It was only the other evening that she talked more wildly if anything than before."

About this time Marion, alone in her tent, said again, as she had said a dozen times during the last few days: "If I *only knew!*" And this time she added, "If I only knew *how* to know!"

CHAPTER XXV.

SERMONS IN CHALK.

"NOW, see here, Marion Wilbur, wake up and give me your attention. I want to make a speech; I've caught the infection. It's queer in a place where there is so much speech-making done that I can't have a chance to express my views."

"I'm all attention," Marion answered, turning on her pillow, and giving Eurie a sleepy stare. "What has moved you to be eloquent? Give me the subject."

"The subject is the reflex influence of preach

ing! It may have different effects on different natures. Its effect on mine has been marked enough. I'm thoroughly surfeited. I don't want to hear another sermon while I am here, and I don't *mean* to. They are all sermons. The subject may be scientific, literary or artistic, and it amounts to the same thing; they contrive to row around to the same spot from whatever point they start. Now, I came here for fun, and I'm being literally cheated out of it. So the application of my remark is, I've learned since I have been here always to have an application to everything, and this time it is that I won't go any more. I've studied the programme carefully, and I have selected just what I am going to do. That Mrs. Knox has a reception this morning. I've heard about her before; she is awfully in earnest, and awfully good. Oh, I haven't the least doubt of it; but, you see, I don't want to be good, nor to have such an uncomfortable amount of goodness about me."

"She is said to be one of the most successful Sabbath-school teachers here; and I heard a gentleman say last night that her primary class was a regular training school for young ladies in

Christian work. You know she has ever so many teachers under her."

"I can't help that. I am not one of them, I am thankful to say. What do I care whether she is successful or not? That won't help me any. I know all about her. They say the young ladies in her classes are invariably converted before they have been under her influence long. So if you want to be converted you have only to go to Elmira and join her class; but as for me, I am not in the mood for that experience yet, and I am not going near her."

"What *are* you going to do then?"

"Just what I please! That is what I came for. Just think of the absurdity of we four girls rushing to meeting at the rate we have been doing for the last week. What do you suppose the people at home would think of us? Why, I didn't expect to hear any of their sermons when I came. I as good as promised Flossy that I would frolic about with her all the time, and now the absurd little dunce acts as if she were under a wager to be on the ground every time the bell rings! I've declared off. I

can tell you to an item just what I am going to hear. There is a performance to come off this afternoon some time that I shall be ready for. I loitered behind the King tent last night, and heard him say so. That Frank Beard is going to give his chalk talk — caricatures: that I shall hear, and especially *see.* It will be hard work to poke a sermon into that. I guess that is to be this afternoon; it is to be some time soon, anyway, and I shall watch for it. Then there is to be another extra. Mrs. Miller is going to read a story. I can give you the title of it. I didn't sit on that horrid stump in the dark listening to Dr. Vincent for nothing. It is to be 'Three Blind Mice.' Now it stands to reason that a story with such a title will not be very far above my intellectual capacity, and it *can't* very well develop into a sermon, or close with a prayer-meeting. Then I'm going to the concert by the Tennesseeans;' their jargon won't hurt me; and, of course, I shall attend the President's reception. I must have a stare at him — and that is every solitary meeting I am going to attend. I've heard the last preaching that I mean to for some time."

Now this was what Eurie Mitchell *said*. Let me tell you a little bit about what she *thought*. She was by no means so indifferent, nor so bored as she would have Marion understand. She was by no means in the state of mind that Ruth had been, or that Marion was. No doubts as to the general truth of all the vital doctrines of Christianity had ever troubled her. She accepted without question the belief of the so-called Christian World. Neither was she bewildered as to what constituted Christian life. No vague notion that to unite herself with some church would let her into the charmed circle had ever befogged her brain.

On the contrary, she knew better than many a Christian does just what the Christian profession involved, and just how narrow a path ought to be walked by those professing to follow Christ. In proportion to the keenness of her sarcasm over blundering, stumbling Christians, had her eyes been open to what they ought to be.

There was just this the matter with Eurie. She knew so well what religious professions involved that she wanted to make none. She

hated the thought of self-abnegation, of bridling her eager tongue, of going only where her enlightened conscience said a Christian should go, of looking out for and calling after others to go with her. She wished deliberately to ignore it all. Not forever, she would have been shocked at the thought. Some time she meant to give intense heed to these things, and then indeed the church should see what a Christian *could* be! But not now.

There were a hundred things laid down in her programme for the coming winter that she knew perfectly well were not the things to do or say, provided she were a Christian, and she deliberately wished to avoid the fear of becoming one. Just here she was afraid of the influence of Chautauqua.

How was it possible to attend these meetings, to listen to these daily, hourly addresses, teeming either directly or indirectly with the same thought, personal consecration, without feeling herself drawn within the circle? She would *not* be drawn. This was her deliberate conclusion, therefore her determination.

It was almost well for her that she could not

realize on what fearfully dangerous ground she was treading! I wonder if those over whom the Lord says, "Let them alone," are ever conscious at the time that the order has gone forth, and that they are to feel their consciences pressing home this matter no more?

"Well," said Marion, after turning this resolution over in her mind for a few minutes, "I dare say you will lose a good many things worth hearing; but I have nothing to do with that — only I want you to go with me up to hear Mrs. Knox this morning. I've *got* to go, for I promised especially to report her for the teachers at home, and it is stupid to go alone. *She* won't preach, and she won't bore you, and I want you to help me remember items."

So, much against her will, Eurie was coaxed into this departure from her programme, and came back from the meeting in intense disgust.

"Talk about *her* not preaching," she said, venting her annoyance on Marion while she energetically brushed her hair. "Every fold of her dress preached a sermon! She makes me ache all over, she is so powerfully in earnest; and didn't she hint what angels of goodness those girls o.

hers were — those teachers! I'd like to know how they could be anything else but good with such an example at hand. Just think, Marion, of having the brains that that woman has, and the energy and tact and the skill of a general, and then forcing it into a Sunday-school class room for the teaching of a hundred little dots that have just tumbled out of their cradles!"

"Well, if she teaches them to tumble out on the right side so that they will come up grand men and women, what then? Isn't that an ambition worthy of her?"

"Stuff and nonsense! Don't you go to preaching. I shall go and drown myself in the lake if I hear any more of it, and then one worthless person will be out of the way. But don't you dare to ask me to go and hear that woman again! I won't give up my plans in life for hers, and she needn't hint it to me. And, Marion Wilbur, I am not going to listen to another man or woman who has the least chance to fire words right at me — now mark my words."

Full of this determination she carried it out during the afternoon, until the hour for Frank Beard's caricatures; then, secure from fear of

a sermon, she came gayly down and considered herself fortunate to secure a seat directly in front of the stand and in full view of the blackboard. If you have never seen Frank Beard make pictures you know nothing about what a good time she had. They were such funny pictures!—just a few strokes of the magic crayon and the character described would seem to start into life before you, and you would feel that you could almost know what thoughts were passing in the heart of the creature made of chalk. Eurie looked, and listened, and laughed. The old deacon who thought the Sunday-school was being glorified too much had his exact counterpart among her acquaintances, so far as his looks were concerned. The three troublesome Sunday-school scholars fairly convulsed her by their life-like appearance. There was the little scamp of a boy who was revealed by the dozen to any one who took a walk down town toward the close of the day; the argumentative old man, with his nose pointing out a flaw in your reasoning or on the keen scent for a mistake; and the pert fourteen-year-old girl whose very nose, as it

slightly turned upward, showed that she knew more than all the logicians and theologians in the world.

This entertainment was exactly in Eurie's line. If there was anything in the world that she was an adept at it was looking up weak points in the characters of other people; and when the silly girl with but two ideas — one of them bows and the other beaux — lived and breathed before her on the blackboard her delight reached its climax.

"She is the very picture of Nettie Arnold!" she whispered to Marion. "When I go home I mean to tell her that her photograph was displayed at Chautauqua. She is just vain enough to believe it!"

Still the fun went on. Just a few bold, rapid strokes, and some caricature breathed before them, so real that the character was guessed before the explanation was given, and the ground rang with continued and overpowering roars of laughter.

Into the midst of this entertainment came Dr. Vincent, his face aglow with the exertion of hearty laughter, every feature of it expressive of

his hearty appreciation of this hour of recreation, and yet every feature alive and alert with a higher and more enduring feeling.

"Frank," he said, laying a friendly hand on the artist's arm, "our time is almost up. Give us the symbol of the teacher's work."

There was an instant of rapid motion, a few skillful lines, and it needed no word of explanation to recognize the great family Bible. "Now the symbol of the teacher's hope," and on one page of the open Bible there flashed an anchor.

"Now the symbol of his reward," and lo, there rose up before them the solid wall, built brick by brick. Dr. Vincent's voice was almost husky with feeling, so suddenly had the play of his emotions changed, as he said: "Now we want the the foundation."

How did Frank Beard do it with a dull colored crayon and a half-dozen movements of his skillful arm? How can I tell, except that God has given to the arm wondrous skill; but there appeared before that astonished multitude a foundation as of granite, and there rose from it, as if suddenly hewed out before them, a clean-cut solid shaft of gray, imperishable granite.

One more dash of the wondrous crayon and the shaft was done — a solid cross!

Prof. Sherwin was sitting, for want of a better position, on the floor of the stand. It was the only available space. He had been looking and enjoying as only men like Prof. Sherwin can; and now, as he watched the outgrowth of this wonderful cross, as the last stroke was given that made it complete, and a sound like a subdued shout of joy and triumph murmured through the crowd, moved as by a sudden mighty impulse that he could not control, his splendid voice burst forth in the glorious words:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me *hide* myself in Thee."

And that great multitude took it up and rolled the tribute of praise down those resounding aisles until people bowed themselves, and some of them wept softly in the very excess of their joy and thanksgiving. It was all so sudden, so unexpected; yet it was so surely the key-note to the Chautauqua heart, and fitted in so aptly with their professions and intentions. They could

play for a few minutes — none could do it with better hearts or more utter enjoyment than these same splendid leaders — but how surely their hearts turned back to the main thought, the main work, the main hope, in life and in death.

As for Eurie, she will not be likely to forget that sermon. It almost overpowered her. There came over her such a sudden and eager longing to understand the depths from whence such feeling sprung, to rest her feet on the same foundation, that for the moment her heart gave a great bound and said: "It is worth all the self-denial and all the change of life and plans which it would involve. I almost think I want that rather than anything else." That miserable "almost!" I wonder how many souls it has shipwrecked? The old story. If Eurie had been familiar with her Bible it would surely have reminded her of the foolish listener who said, while he trembled under the truth, "*Almost* thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Shall I tell you what came in, just then and there, to influence her decision? It was such a miserable little thing — nothing more than the remembrance of certain private parties that

were a standing institution among "their set" at home, to meet fortnightly in each other's parlors for a social dance. Not a ball! oh, no, not at all. These young ladies did not attend *balls*, unless occasionally a charity ball, when a *very* select party was made up. Simply quiet evenings among *special* friends, where the special amusement was dancing.

"Dear me!" you say, "I am a Christian, and I don't see anything wrong in *dancing*. Why, I dance at private parties very often. What was there in that thought that needed to influence her?"

Oh, well, we are not arguing, you know. This is simply a record of matters and things as they occurred at Chautauqua. It can hardly be said to be a story, except as records of real lives of course make stories.

But Eurie was *not* a Christian, you see; and however foolish it may have been in her she had picked out dancing as one of the amusements not fitting to a Christian profession. It is a queer fact, for the cause of which I do not pretend to account, but if you are curious, and will investigate this subject, you will find that four fifths of

the people in this world who are not Christians have tacitly agreed among themselves that dancing is not an amusement that seems entirely suited to church-members. If you want to get at the reason for this strange prejudice, question some of them. Meantime the fact exists that Eurie felt herself utterly unwilling to give up the leadership of those fortnightly parties, and that the trivial question actually came in then and there, while she stood looking at that picture of the cross; and in proportion as her sudden conviction of desire lost itself in this whirl of intended amusement did her disgust arise at the thought that she had been actually betrayed into listening to another sermon!

CHAPTER XXVI.

"THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM."

MARION went alone to the services the next morning. It was in vain that she assured Eurie that Miss Morris was going to conduct one of the normal classes, and that she had heard her spoken of as unusually sparkling. Eurie shook her head.

"Go and hear her sparkle, then, by all means I won't. Now that's a very inelegant word to use, but it is expressive, and when *I* use it you may know that I mean it; I am tired of the whole story, and I have been cheated times enough. Look at yesterday! It was a dozen prayer-meetings combined. No, I don't get caught this morning."

"But the subject is one that will not admit

of sermonizing and prayer-meetings this morning," Marion pleaded; "I am specially interested it. It is 'How to win and hold attention.' If there is anything earthly that a ward school-teacher needs to know it is those two items. I expect to get practical help."

"You needn't expect anything *earthly;* this crowd have nothing to do with matters this side of eternity. As for the subject not admitting of sermonizing, look at the subject of blackboard caricatures. What came of that?"

So she went her way, and Marion, who had seen Miss Morris and had been attracted, looked her up with earnest work in view. She had an ambition to be a power in her school-room. Why should not this subject help *her?*

The tent was quite full, but she made her way to a corner and secured a seat. Miss Morris was apparently engaged in introducing herself and apologizing for her subject.

"I tried to beg off," she said; "I told them that the subject and I had nothing in common; that I was a primary class teacher, and in that line lay my work. But there is no sort of use in trying to change Dr. Vincent's mind about

anything, so I had to submit. But for once in my life I remind myself of Gough. I once overheard him in conversation with a committee on lectures. They were objecting to having him lecture on temperance, and pressing him to name some other subject. 'Choose what subject you please, gentlemen,' he said at last, 'and I'll lecture on it, but remember what I *say* will be on temperance.' So they have given me this subject and I have engaged to take it, but I want you to remember that what I *say* will be on primary class-teaching."

By this time Miss Morris had the sympathy of her audience, and had awakened an interest to see how she would follow out her programme, and from first to last she held their attention. Certain thoughts glowed vividly. I don't know who else they influenced, but I knew they roused and startled Marion, and will have much to do with her future methods of teaching.

"Remember," said the speaker, "that you can not live on skim-milk and teach cream!" The thought embodied in that brief and telling sentence was as old as time, and Marion had heard it as long ago as she remembered anything, but it never flashed before her until that moment.

What an illustration! She saw herself teaching her class in botany to analyze the flowers, to classify them, to tell every minute item concerning them, and she taught them nothing to say concerning the Creator. Was this "skim-milk" teaching? She knew so many ways in which, did she but have this belief concerning heaven, and Christ, and the judgment, in her heart, she could impress it upon her scholars. She had aimed to be the very *cream* of teachers. Was she? She came back from her reverie, or, rather, her self-questioning, to hear Miss Morris say:

"Why, one move of your hand moves all creation! and as surely does one thought of your soul grow and spread and roll through the universe. Why, you can't sit in your room alone, and think a mean thought, or a false thought, or an unchristian thought, without its influencing not only all people around you, not only all people in all the universe, but nations yet unborn must live under the shadow or the glory that the thought involves."

Bold statements these! But Marion could follow her. Intellectually she was thoroughly

posted. Had she not herself used the illustration of the tiny stream that simpered through the home meadow and went on, and on, and on, until it helped to surge the beaches of the ocean? But here was a principle involved that reached beyond the ocean, that ignored time, that sought after eternity. Was she following the stream? Could she honestly tell that it might not lead to a judgment that should call her to account for her non-religious influence over her scholars? Marion was growing heavy-hearted; she wanted at least to do no harm in the world if she could do no good. But if all this mountain weight of evidence at Chautauqua proved anything, it proved that she was living a life of infidelity, for the influence of which she was to be called into judgment.

No sort of ease to comfort herself with the thought that she talked of her peculiar views to no one; it began to be evident that the things which she did *not* do were more startling than the things which she did.

On the whole, no comfort came to her troubled soul through this morning session. To herself she seemed precisely where she was when she

went into that tent, only perhaps a trifle more impressed with the solemnity of all things.

But, without knowing it, a great stride had been taken in her education. She was not again to be able to say: "I injure no one with my belief; I keep it to myself." "No man liveth to himself."

The verse came solemnly to her as she went out, as though other than human voice were reminding her of it, and life began to feel like an overwhelming responsibility that she could not assume. When one begins to *feel* that thought in all its force the next step is to find one who will assume the responsibility for us. She met Ruth on her way up the hill.

"Flossy has deserted me," Ruth explained as they met; "Eurie carried her away to take a walk. Are you going to hear about John Knox? I am interested in him chiefly because of the voice that is to tell of him to-day; I like Dr. Hurlburt."

Marion's only reply was: "I don't see but you come to meeting quite as regularly, now that you are at the hotel, as you did when on the grounds."

Then they went to secure their seats. I am not to attempt to tell you anything about the John Knox lecture; indeed I have given over telling more about the Chautauqua addresses. It is of no sort of use. One only feels like bemoaning a failure after any attempt to repeat such lectures as we heard there. Besides, I am chiefly interested at present in their effect on our girls.

They listened — these two, and enjoyed as people with brains must necessarily have done. But there was more than that to it; there were consequences that will surely be met again at the last great day.

Ruth, as she walked thoughtfully away, said to herself: "That is the way. *Live* the truth. It is a different day, and the trials and experiences are different, but *life* must be the same. It is not the day for half-way Christianity nor for idling; I will be an earnest Christian, or I will not dishonor the name and disgrace the memory of such men as Knox by claiming to be of their faith."

While Marion, as she turned her flushed cheeks hastily away from Ruth, not willing to

show one who knew nothing about this matter, save that it was expedient to join a church, had gotten one foot set firmly toward the rock.

"The power that enabled *that* man to live *that* life was certainly of God," she thought. "It *must* be true. God must be in communication with some of the souls that have lived. Is he now, and can *I* be one of them? Oh, I wonder if there are a favored few who have shone out as grand lights in the world and have gone up from the world to their reward? And I wonder if there is no such thing now? If the blundering creatures who call themselves by his name are nothing but miserable imitations of what was *once* real?

"Such lives as that one can understand; but how can I ever believe that Deacon Cole's life is molded by the same influence, or, indeed, that mine can be? Must I be a Deacon Cole Christian if I am one at all?"

The afternoon clouded over, and a mincing little rain began to fall. Marion stood in the tent door and grumbled over it.

"I wanted to hear that Mr. Hazard," she said; "I rather fancy his face, and I fancy the name

of his subject. I had a curiosity to see what he would do with it, and here is this rain to hinder."

Ruth and Flossy had come over for the day, and were waiting in the tent.

"Haven't you been at Chautauqua long enough to catch one of its cardinal rules, never to stay at home for rain?" Flossy said.

Marion looked around at her. She was putting on her rubbers.

"Are you really going?" She asked the question in great surprise. "Why, Flossy, it is going to rain hard!"

"What of it?" said Flossy, lightly. "I have waterproof, and rubbers, and umbrella, and if it gets to be too wet I can run to a tent."

"If you were at home you wouldn't think of going to church. Why, Flossy Shipley, I never knew you to go out in the rain! I thought you were always afraid you would spoil your clothes."

"That was because I had none already spoiled to wear," Flossy answered, cheerily; "but that difficulty is obviated; I have spoiled two dresses since I have been here. This one now is indif-

ferent to the rain, and will be for the future. I have an improvement on that plan, though; I mean to have a rainy-day dress as soon as I get home. Come, it is time we were off."

"I believe I am a dunce," Marion said, slowly. "I think it is going to rain hard; but as I have to go, at home, whether it rains or shines, I suppose I can do it here. But if this were a congregation of respectable city Christians, instead of a set of lunatics, there wouldn't be a dozen out."

They found hundreds out, however. Indeed, it proved to be difficult to secure seats. That address was heard under difficulties. In the first place it *would* rain; not an out-and-out hearty shower, that would at once set at rest the attempt to hold an out-door meeting, but an exasperating little drizzle, enlivened occasionally by a few smart drops that seemed to hint business. There was a constant putting up of umbrellas and putting them down again. There was a constant fidgeting about, and getting up and sitting down again, to let some of the more nervous ones who had resolved upon a decided rain escape to safer quarters. Half of the people had their heads twisted around to get a peep

at the sky, to see what the clouds really *do* mean, anyway.

Our girls had one of the uncomfortable posts. Arrived late, they had to take what they could get, and it was some distance from the speaker, and their sight and sound were so marred by the constant changes and the whirl of umbrellas that Marion presently lost all patience and gave up the attempt to listen. She would have deserted altogether but for the look of eager attention on Flossy's face. Despite the annoyances, *she* was evidently hearing and enjoying. It seemed a pity to disturb her and suggest a return to the tent; besides, Marion felt half ashamed to do so.

It was not pleasant to give tacit acknowledgment to the fact that poor little, unintellectual Flossy was much more interested than herself. She gave herself up to an old and favorite employment of hers, that of looking at faces and studying them, when a sudden hush that seemed to be settling over the hither to fidgety audience arrested her attention.

The speaker's voice was full of pathos, and so quiet had the place become that every word of

his could be distinctly heard. He was evidently in the midst of a story, the first of which she had not heard. This was the sentence, as her ears took it up:

"Don't cry, father, don't cry! To-night I shall be with Jesus, and I will tell him that you did all you could to bring me there!"

What a tribute for a child to give to a father's love! Flossy, with her cheeks glowing and her eyes shining like stars, quietly wiped away the tears, and in her heart the resolve grew strong to live so that some one, dying, could say of her: "I will tell Jesus that you did all you could to bring me there!"

Do you think that was what the sentence said to Marion? Quick as thought her life flashed back to that old dingy, weather-beaten house, to that pale-faced man, with his patched clothing and his gray hairs straggling over on the coarse pillow. *Her* father, dying — her one friend, who had been her memory of love and care all these long years, dying — and these were the last words his lips had said:

"Don't cry, little girl — father's dear little girl. I am going to Jesus. I shall be there in

a little while. I shall tell him that I tried to have you come!"

Oh, blessed father! How hard he had tried in his feebleness and weakness to teach her the way! How sure he had seemed to feel that she would follow him! And how had she wandered! How far away she was! Oh, blessed Spirit of God, to seek after her all these years, through all the weak and foolish mazes of doubt, and indifference, and declared unbelief — still coming with her down to this afternoon at Chautauqua, and there renewing to her her father's parting word.

She had often and often thought of these words of her father's. In a sense, they had been ever present with her. Just why they should come at this time, bringing such a sense of certainty about them to her very soul that all this was truth, God's solemn, *real*, unchangeable truth, and force this conviction upon her in such a way that she was moved to say, "Whereas I *was* blind, now I see," I can not tell.

Why Mr. Hazard was used as the instrument of such a revelation of God to her I can not

tell. Perhaps he had prayed that his work at Chautauqua that rainy afternoon might, in some way, be blessed to the help of some struggling soul. Perhaps this was the answer to his prayer — unheard, unseen by him, as many an answer to our pleading is, and yet the answer as surely comes. Who can tell how this may be. I do not know. I know this, that Marion's heart gave a great sobbing cry, as it said:

"Oh, father, father! if your God, if your Christ, will help me, I will — I will *try* to come."

It was her way of repeating the old cry, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." And I do know that it is written, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." It was fifteen years that the weary father had been resting from his labors, and here were his works following him.

I have heard that Mr. Hazard said, as he folded his papers and came down from the stand that afternoon, "It was useless to try to talk in such a rain, with the prospect of more every minute.

The people could not listen. It would have been better to have adjourned. Nothing was accomplished." Much *he* knew about it, or will know until the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed!

CHAPTER XXVII.

UNFINISHED MUSIC.

MEANTIME, this day, which was to be so fraught with consequences to Marion, was on Eurie's hands to dispose of as best she could. To be at Chautauqua, and to be bent on having nothing whatever to do with any of the Chautauqua life, was in itself a novel position. The more so as she felt herself quite deserted. The necessity for reporting served Marion as an excuse for attending even those meetings which she did not report; and the others having gone to Mayville to live, this foolish sheep, who was

within the fold, and who would not be *of* it, went wandering whither she would in search of amusement.

After Marion left her she made her way to the museum, and a pleasant hour she spent; one could certainly not desire a more attractive spot. She went hither and thither, handling and admiring the books, the pictures, the maps, the profusion of curiosities, and, at the end of the hour, when the press of visitors became too great to make a longer stay agreeable, she departed well pleased with herself that she had had the wisdom to choose such a pleasant resort instead of a seat in some crowded tent as a listener.

Coming out, she walked down the hill, and on and on, watching the crowds of people who were gathering, and wishing she had a programme that she might see what the special attraction was that seemed to be drawing so many.

At last she reached the wharf. The Assembly steamer was lying at her dock, her jaunty flags flying, and the commotion upon her decks betokening that she was making ready for a voy-

age. The crowd seemed greater there than at any other point. It would appear that the special attraction was here, after all. She understood it, and pushed nearer, as the ringing notes of song suddenly rose on the air, and she recognized the voices of the Tennesseeans.

This was a great treat; she delighted in hearing them. She allowed herself to be elbowed and jostled by the throng, reaching every moment by judicious pushing a place where she could not only hear but see, and where escape was impossible. The jubilant chorus ceased and one of those weird minor wails, such as their music abounds in, floated tenderly around her.

It was a farewell song, so full of genuine pathos, and so tenderly sung, that it was in vain to try to listen without a swelling of the throat and a sense of sadness. Something in the way that the people pressed nearer to listen suggested to Eurie that it must be designed as a farewell tribute to somebody, and presently Prof. Sherwin mounted a seat that served as a platform and gave them a tender informal farewell address. In every sentence his great, warm heart shone.

"I am going away," he said, "before the blessed season at Chautauqua is concluded. I am going with a sad heart, for I feel that opportunities here for work for the Master have been great, and some of them I have lost. And yet there is light in the sadness, for the work that I can not do will yet be done. I once sat before my organ improvising a thought that was in my heart, trying to give expression to it, and I could not. I knew what I wanted, and I knew it was in my heart, but how to give it expression I did not know. A celebrated organist came up the stairs and stood beside me. I looked around to him. 'Can't you take this tune,' I said, 'just where I leave it, and finish it for me as I have it in my heart to do? I can't give it utterance. Don't you see what I want?'"

"'Perhaps I do,' he said, and he placed his fingers over my fingers, on the same keys that mine were touching, and I slipped out of the seat and back into the shadow, and he slipped into my place, and then the music rolled forth. My tune, only I could not play it. He was doing it for me. So, though I may have failed in my work that I have tried to do here, the

great Master is here, and I pray and I hope and I believe that he will put his grand hand upon my unfinished work and in heaven I shall meet it completed.' "

What was there in this to move Eurie to tears? She did not know Prof. Sherwin — that is, she had never been introduced to him — but she had heard him sing, she had heard him pray, she had met him in the walk and asked where the Sunday-school lesson was, and he had in part directed her — directed her in such a way that she had been led to seek further, and in doing so had met Miss Ryder, and in meeting her had been interested ever since in studying a Christian life. Was this one of Prof. Sherwin's unfinished tunes? Would he meet it again in heaven?

A very tender spirit took possession of Eurie — an almost irresistible longing to know more of this influence, or presence, or whatever name it should be called, that so moved hearts, and made the friends of a week say farewell with tears, and yet with hopeful smiles as they spoke in joy and assurance of a future meeting.

Prof. Sherwin and his friends embarked, and the dainty little steamer turned her graceful

head toward Mayville, and slipped away over the silver water. Eurie made no attempt to get away from the throng who pressed to the edge of the dock to get the last bow, the last flutter of his handkerchief. She even drew out her own handkerchief and fluttered it after him, and received from him a special bow, and was almost decided to resolve to be present in joy at that other meeting, and to make sure this very day of her title to an inheritance there. Almost!

Going back she met Ruth and Flossy. She seized eagerly upon the latter.

"Come," she said, "you have been to meetings enough, and you haven't taken a single walk with me since we have been here, and think of the promises we made to entertain each other."

Flossy laughed cheerfully.

"We have been entertained, without any effort on our part," she said. Nevertheless she suffered herself to be persuaded to go for a walk, provided Eurie would go to Palestine.

"What nonsense!" Eurie said, disdainfully, when Flossy had explained to her that she had a consuming desire to wander along the banks of

the Jordan, and view those ancient cities, historic now. "However, I would just as soon walk in that direction as any other."

There was one other person who, it transpired, would as soon take a walk as do anything else just then. He joined the girls as they turned toward the Palestine road. That was Mr. Evan Roberts.

"Are you going to visit the Holy Land this morning, and may I be of your party?" he asked.

"Yes," Flossy answered, whether to the first question, or to both in one, she did not say. Then she introduced Eurie, and the three walked on together, discussing the morning and the meetings with zest.

"Here we are, on 'Jordan's stormy banks,'" Mr. Roberts said, at last, halting beside the grassy bank. "I suppose there was never a more perfect geographical representation than this."

"Do you really think it has any practical value?" Eurie asked, skeptically. Mr. Roberts looked at her curiously.

"Hasn't it to you?" he said. "Now, to me,

it is just brimful of interest and value; that is, as much value as geographical knowledge ever is. I take two views of it. If I never have an actual sight of the sacred land, by studying this miniature of it, I have as full a knowledge as it is possible to get without the actual view, and if I at some future day am permitted to travel there, why — well, you know of course how pleasant it is to be thoroughly posted in regard to the places of interest that you are about to visit; every European traveler understands that."

"But do you suppose it is really an accurate outline?" Eurie said, again, quoting opinions that she had read until she fancied they were her own.

Again Mr. Roberts favored her with that peculiar look from under heavy eyebrows — a look half satirical, half amused.

"Some of the most skilled surveyors and traveled scholars have so reported," he said, carelessly. "And when you add to that the fact that they are Christian men, who have no special reason for getting up a wholesale deception for us, and are supposed to be tolerably reliable

on all other subjects, I see no reason to doubt the statement."

On the whole, Eurie had the satisfaction of realizing that she had appeared like a simpleton.

Flossy, meantime, was wandering delightedly along the banks, stopping here and there to read the words on the little white tablets that marked the places of special interest.

"Do you see," she said, turning eagerly, "that these are Bible references on each tablet? Wouldn't it be interesting to know what they selected as the scene to especially mark this place?"

Mr. Roberts swung a camp-chair from his arm, planted it firmly in the ground, and drew a Bible from his pocket.

"Miss Mitchell," he said, "suppose you sit down here in this road, leading from Jerusalem to Bethany, and tell us what is going on just now in Bethany, while Miss Shipley and I supply you with chapter and verse."

"I am not very familiar with the text-book," Eurie said. "If you are really in the village yourselves you might possibly inquire of the in-

habitants before I could find the account." But she took the chair and the Bible.

"Look at Matthew xxi. 17, Eurie," Flossy said, stooping over the tablet, and Eurie read:

"'And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.'"

"That was Jesus, wasn't it? Then he went this way, this very road, Eurie, where you are sitting!" It was certainly very fascinating.

"And stopped at the house on which you have your hand, perhaps," Mr. Roberts said, smiling at her eager face.

"That might have been Simon's house, for instance."

"Did *he* live in Bethany? I don't know anything about these things."

"Eurie, look if you can find anything about him. The next reference is Matthew xxvi."

And again Eurie read:

"'Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper.'"

"The very place!" Flossy said, again. "Oh, I want so much to know what happened then!"

"Won't Miss Mitchell read it to us?" Mr. Roberts said, and he arranged his shawl along

the ground for seats. "Since we have really come to Bethany, let us have the full benefit of it. Now, Miss Shipley, take a seat, and we will give ourselves up to the pleasure of being with Jesus in Simon's house, and looking on at the scene."

So they disposed of themselves on the grass, and Eurie, hardly able to restrain a laugh over the novelty of the situation, and yet wonderfully fascinated by the whole scene, read to them the tender story of the loving woman with her sweet-smelling ointment, growing more and more interested, until in the closing verse her voice was full of feeling.

"'Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done be told as a memorial of her.'"

"Think of that!" said Mr Roberts. "And here are we, eighteen hundred years afterward, sitting here in Bethany and talking of that same woman still! Miss Mitchell, are you going to do something for Christ that shall be talked over a thousand years from now? There is a chance for undying fame."

"Doubtful!" Eurie said, but she did not smile; her face was grave.

"Or, better still, are you going to do such work for Christ that, hundreds of years after, your influence will be silently living and working out its fruit in human hearts?"

"It is altogether more likely that I shall do nothing at all."

"Out of the question," he said, with a grave smile. "Either for or against, every life must be, whether we will it or not. 'He that is not with me is against me,' was the word of the Master himself, and as long as eternity lasts the fruit of the sowing will last."

"That is a fearfully solemn thought," Flossy said, earnestly.

Mr. Roberts turned toward her a face aglow with smiles now.

"And a wondrously precious one," he said, and Flossy answered him in a low tone:

"Yes, I can see that it might be."

Now, the actual fact is, that those three people wandered around that far-away land until the morning vanished and the loud peal of the Chautauqua bells announced the fact that the feast of

intellect was over, and it was time for dinner They went from Bethany to Bethel, and from Bethel to Shechem, and they even climbed Mount Hermon's snowy peak, and looked about on the lovely plain below. In every place there was Bible reading, and Eurie was the reader, and it was such a morning that she will remember for all time.

"Pray, who is this Mr. Roberts?" she asked, as they parted company at the foot of the hill. "Where did you make his acquaintance?"

"He is Mrs. Smythe's nephew," Flossy said. "She introduced me to him the other evening."

"The other evening! You seemed to be as well acquainted as though you had spent the summer together."

"Some people have a way of seeming like friends on short acquaintance," Flossy said, with grave face and smiling eyes.

"You two missed a good deal by your folly this morning," Ruth said, as they met at dinner. "We had a grand lecture."

"So had we," answered Eurie, significantly, and that was every word she vouchsafed concerning the trip to Palestine.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MENTAL PROBLEMS.

"DR. DEEMS," said Ruth, looking up from her programme with a thoughtful air. "I wonder if he is a man whom I have any special desire to hear?"

You must constantly remember the entire ignorance of these girls on all names and topics that pertained to the religious world. Ruth knew indeed that the gentleman in question was a New York clergyman; that was as far as her knowledge extended.

"His subject is interesting," Flossy said.

"I don't think it is," said Eurie. "Not to

me, anyhow. Nature and I have nothing in common, except to have a good time together if we can get it. She is a miserably disappointed jade, I know. What has she done for us since we have been here except to arrange rainy weather? I'm going to visit his honor the mummy this morning, and from there I am going to the old pyramid; and I advise you to go with me, all of you. Talk about nature when there is an old fellow to see who was acquainted with it thousands of years ago. Nature is too common an affair to be interested in."

"Oh, are you going to the museum?" said Flossy. "Then please get me one of the 'Bliss' singing books, will you? I want to secure one before they are all gone. Girls, don't you each want one of them to take home? The hymns are lovely."

"I don't," said Eurie, "unless he is for sale to go along and sing them. I can't imagine anything tamer than to hear some commonplace voice trying to do those songs that he roars out without any effort at all. What has become of the man?"

"He has gone," said Marion. "Called home suddenly, some one told me. His singing *is* splendid, isn't it? I don't know but I feel much as you do about the book. Think of having Deacon Millar try to sing, 'Only an armor-bearer!' I don't mind telling you that I felt very much as if I were being lifted right off my feet and carried up somewhere, I hardly know where, when I heard him sing that. I was coming down the hill, away off, you know, by the post-office — no, away above the post-office, and he suddenly burst forth. I stopped to listen, and I could hear every single word as distinctly as I can hear you in this tent."

"Hear!" said Eurie, "I guess you could. I shouldn't be surprised if they heard him over at Mayville, and that is what brings such crowds here every day. Did you ever *see* anything like the way the people come here, anyhow?"

"I don't feel at all as you do," said Flossy, going back to the question of singing-books. "After we get let down a little, 'Only an armor-bearer' will sound very well even from common singers. It has in it what can't be taken out because a certain voice is lost; and

the book is full of other and simpler pieces, and lovely choruses, that people can catch after one hearing."

"Flossy is going home to introduce it into the First Church," Eurie said, gravely.

Flossy's cheeks flushed.

"I had not thought of that," she said, simply; "perhaps we can. In any case get me a couple, Eurie."

The discussion on the morning service ended in a division of the party. Ruth, who had come over early on purpose to attend, was obliged to succumb to a feeling of utter weariness and lie down.

Eurie steadily refused to go to the platform meeting, assuring them that she knew Dr. Deems would be "as dry as a stick; all New York ministers were."

So Flossy and Marion went away together, Marion with her note-book in the hope of getting an item for a newspaper letter that must be written that afternoon.

They were late, and almost abandoned in despair the hope of getting within hearing, until a happy thought suggested a seat on the platform

stair at the speaker's back. There was a "crack" there, Marion said, into which they presently crept.

The address was already commenced. Marion listened at first with that indifferent air that a face wears when its owner perforce commences in the middle of a thing, and has to *wait* his way to a tangible idea of what is being said.

There was not long waiting, however. Her eyes began to dilate and her face to glow; she was almost a worshiper of eloquence, and surely no one ever sat for two hours and listened to a more unbroken flow of rich, glowing words, shining like diamonds, than fell lavishly around the listeners that Friday morning at Chautauqua. But a few minutes and Marion's pencil began to move with speed. This was the thought that had thrilled her:

"First, light; then liberation from chaos; then grass; and then God stopped his work and gazed with delight on the picture he had drawn. Think what a picture it must have been! There was nothing but rocks ground down when God said, 'Earth, grow!' Then straightway the mother power fell down upon the earth, life pulsed

in her veins, and the baby shoot of grass sprang up, and the rocky earth wrapped herself in her garment of emerald, and God, stopping his work, said, 'Useful, beautiful!'"

When the speaker touched upon the doctrine of the resurrection Marion's pencil paused, and she leaned eagerly forward to get a glimpse of his face. That doctrine had seemed to her doubting heart the strangest, wildest, most hopeless of the Christian theories. If clear light could shine on that, could there not on *anything?* Her face was aglow with interest not only, but with anxiety.

This morning, for the first time in her life, she could be called an honest doubter. She had fancied herself able to believe anything of which her reason had been convinced; but she found, to her surprise and dismay, that so fixed had the habit of unbelief become, it seemed impossible to shake it off, and that she needed to be convinced and reconvinced; that her questionings came in on every hand, seized upon the smallest point, and tormented her without mercy. What about this strange story of the resurrection?

As she listened a subdued smile broke over

her face — a smile of sarcasm. How very absurdly simple the argument from nature was, how utterly unanswerable! And after the sentence, "Tell me how that wonderful field of waving grain came from the bare kernels of corn, and I will tell you how my blessed baby shall rise an angel," Marion said in tone so distinct that it struck on Flossy's ear like a knell, "What a fool!" Not the speaker, as the dismayed and disappointed Flossy supposed, but *herself*.

"The measure of every man is his faith," said Dr. Deems. "The greatest thing a human being can do is *not* to perceive, nor to *compare*, not to *reason*, but to *believe*." And again Marion smiled. If this were true what a pigmy she must be! She began to more than suspect that she was.

"Don't waste time," said the Doctor, "in trying to reconcile science and the Bible. Science wasn't intended to teach religion. The Bible wasn't intended to teach science; but wherever they touch they agree. God sends his servants — scientific men — all abroad through nature to gather facts with which to illustrate the Bible."

Marion began to write again, but it was only

in snatches here and there; not that there was not that which she longed to catch, but she could not write it — the sentences just poured forth; and how perfectly aglow with light and beauty they were! This one sentence she presently wrote:

"In the black ink of his power God wrote the Book of nature; in the red ink of his love he wrote the Bible; and all this *power* is to bring us all to this *love*. Oh, to rest in arms like these! Are they not strong enough?"

Suddenly Marion closed her book and slipped her pencil into her pocket; she could not write. And although she thrilled through every nerve over the majestic sentences that followed and was carried to a pitch of enthusiasm almost beyond her control, when the jubilant thunder of thousands of voices rang together in the matchless closing words, "Blessing, and glory, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God, forever and ever. Amen." She made no further attempt to write; her heart was full; there rang in it this eager cry, "Oh, to rest in arms like these!" Strong enough? Aye, indeed! Doubts were forever set at rest. The

Maker of all nature could be none other than God, and the God of nature was the God of the Bible. It was as clear as the sunlight. Reason was forever satisfied, but there lingered yet the hungering cry, "Oh, to rest in arms like these!"

And Flossy said not a word to her of the resting place. Not because she had not found it strong and safe; not because she did not long to have her friend rest there, but because of that despairing murmur in her heart. "What is the use in saying anything? Had she not heard with her own ears Marion's sneering sentence in the face of the unanswerable arguments that had been presented?" I wonder how often we turn away from harvest fields that are ready for the reader because we mistake for a sneer that which is the admission of a convicted soul?

By afternoon Ruth was rested and ready for meeting; if the truth be known it was her troubled brain which had tired her body and obliged her to rest. She had begun to take up that problem of "Christian work." The platform meeting of the evening before, and, more than anything else, Dr. Niles' address, had fanned her heart into a flame of desire to do something

for the Master. But what could she do? She and Flossy had talked it over together after they reached their room at the hotel; in fact they talked away into the night.

"I don't know," Flossy said, with a little laugh, "but I shall have to depend on the 'unconscious influence' which I exert to do my work for me. I don't know of anything which I can actually *do*. Dr. Niles made a great deal of that."

"Yes," Ruth said, "but you see, Flossy, the people whose unconscious influence does any good are the ones after all who are moving around *trying* to do something. I don't feel sure that he lets the unconcious influence of the drones amount to much, unless it is in the wrong scale. Dr. Niles made a good deal of *that*, you remember."

"Don't you like him ever so much, Ruth?"

"Why, yes," Ruth said again, turning her pillow wearily. "I liked him of course; how could I help it? But, after all, he made me very uncomfortable. I seem to feel as though I *must* find something to do. I have a great deal of time to make up. I tell you what it is, Flossy, I wish you and I could do something for those

two girls. Isn't it strange that they are not interested?"

"But they are not." Flossy said it as positively as if she could see right into their hearts. "I think Marion is worse than ever; and as for Eurie, she won't even go to the meetings, you know."

"I know. Perhaps we would only do harm to try. But what *can* we do? I am sure I don't see anything. And don't you know how clearly Dr. Niles made it appear that there was a special work for each one?"

So they discussed the question, turning it over and over, and getting almost no light, coming to feel themselves very useless and worthless specks on the sea of life, until late in the night Flossy said:

"I'll tell you what it is, Ruth, we must just ask for work — little bits of work, you know — and then keep our eyes open until it comes. I know of things I can do when I get home."

"So do I," said Ruth, "but I want to begin now."

Silence for a few minutes, and then Flossy asked:

"Ruthie, have you written to Mr. Wayne?"

"No," said Ruth, her cheeks flushing even in the darkness. "I wrote a long letter just before this came to me, but I burned it, and I am glad of it."

Then they went to sleep. But the desire for the work did not fade with the daylight. Flossy had even been tempted to say a humble little word to Marion, but had been deterred by the sound of that sneer of which I told you; and Ruth, lying on her bed, had revolved the subject and sent up many an earnest prayer, and went out to afternoon service resolved upon keeping her eyes very wide open.

The special attraction for the afternoon was a conference of primary class teachers. They were out in full force, and were ready for any questions that might fill the hearts and the mouths of eager learners. Our girls had each their special favorites among these leaders. Ruth found herself attracted and deeply interested in every word that Mrs. Clark uttered. Marion was making a study of both Mrs. Knox and Miss Morris, and found it difficult to tell which attracted her most. Even Eurie was

ready for this meeting. She had never been able to shake off the thought of Miss Rider, and her eager enthusiasm in this work, while Flossy had been fascinated and carried away captive by the magnetic voice and manner of Mrs. Partridge.

"She makes me glow," Flossy said, in trying to explain the feeling to the calmer Ruth. "Her life seems to quiver all through me, and make me long to reach after it; to have the same power which she has over the hearts of wild uncared-for children."

And Ruth looked down on the exquisite bit of flesh and blood beside her, and thought of her elegant home and her elegant mother, and of all the softening and enervating influences of her city life, and laughed. How little had she in common with such a work as that to which Mrs. Partridge had given her soul!

Keeping her eyes open, as she had planned to do, this same Flossy saw as she was passing down the aisle the hungry face of one of her boys, as she had mentally called the Arabs with whom her life had brushed on the Sunday morning. The word just described it still, a hungry face,

like one hanging wistfully around the outskirts of a feast in which he had no share. Flossy let go her hold of Ruth's arm and darted toward him.

"How do you do?" she said, in winning voice, before he had even seen her. "I am real glad to see you again. If you will come with me I will get a seat for you. A lady is going to speak this afternoon who has five hundred boys in her class in Sunday-school."

Now the Flossy of two weeks ago, if she could have imagined herself in any such business, would have been utterly disgusted with the result, and gone away with her pretty nose very high.

The boy turned his dirty face toward her and said, calmly:

"What a whopper!"

The experience of a lifetime could not have answered more deftly:

"You come and see. I am almost certain she will tell us about some of them."

Still he stared, and Flossy waited with her pretty face very near to his, and her pretty hand held coaxingly out.

"Come," she said again. And it could not

have been more to the boy's surprise than it was to hers that he presently said:

"Well, go ahead. I can scud if I don't like it. I'll follow."

And he did.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WAITING.

IT required Flossy's eyes and heart both to keep watch of her boy during the progress of that meeting The novelty of the scene, the strangeness of seeing ladies occupying the speaker's stand, kept him quiet and alert, until Mrs. Partridge, that woman with wonderful power over the forgotten, neglected portion of the world, arrested all his bewildering thoughts and centered them on the strange stories she had to tell.

Did you ever hear her tell that remarkable story of her first attempt at controlling that re-

markable class which came under her care, many years ago, in St. Louis? It is full of wonder and pathos and terror and fascination, even to those who are somewhat familiar with such experiences. But Flossy and her boy had never heard, or dreamed of its like. No, I am wrong; the boy had dreamed of scenes just so wild and daring, but even he had not fancied that such people ever found their way to Sunday-schools.

Peanuts, cigars, a pack of cards, and a bowie-knife! Imagine yourself, teacher, to be seated before your orderly and courteous class of boys next Sunday morning and find them transformed into beings represented by such surroundings as these! It was Mrs. Partridge's experience. How fascinating that story is! That one incorrigible boy, the one with the bowie-knife, the one who would make no answer to her questions, show no interest in her stories, ignore her very presence and go on with his horrible mischief, until it even came to a stabbing affray right there in the class-room!

Imagine her meeting that boy ten years afterward, when he was not only a man, but a gentleman; not only that, but a Christian · and not

only that, but a working Christian, superintending a mission Sunday-school, giving his best energies and his best time to work like that! Think of being told by him that the determination to amount to something was taken that morning, ten years before, when he seemed not to be listening nor caring! What is ten years of Christian work when we can hope for such results as that!

Flossy had forgotten her charge; her face was all aglow; so was her heart. She knew more about Christian work than she did an hour before. She had learned that we must take the step that plainly comes next to be taken, no matter for the darkness of the day and the apparent gloom of the future. *Work* is ours; *results* are God's. This life business is divided. Partnership with God. Nothing but *the work* to do; so that it is done to the utmost limit of our best, the responsibility is the Lord's. That was blessed! She could dare to try.

Meantime the boy. He had listened in utmost silence, and with eyes that never for an instant left the speaker's face! When the spell was broken he drew a long sigh, and this was his mighty conclusion:

"That chap was enough sight meaner than I'd ever be, and yet he got to be *some!* I'll be blamed if I don't see what can be done in that line!"

A small beginning; so small that on Flossy's face it excited only smiles. She was ignorant, you know. To Mrs. Partridge that sentence would have been worth a wedge of gold. But it is possible that Flossy's first simple little reach after work may have fruit to bear.

It is difficult to begin to tell about that next day at Chautauqua. There was so much crowded into it that it would almost make a little book of itself. The morning was spent by a large class of people in a state of excited unrest and expectancy. The sensible ones by the hundreds, and indeed I suppose I may say by the thousands, went to the morning service, as usual, and heard the children's sermon, delivered by Dr. Newton; and those who did not, and who afterward had the misfortune to fall in with those who did, bemoaned their folly in not doing likewise. On the whole, the children, and those who had brains enough to become children for the time being, were the only comfortable ones at Chautauqua that Saturday morning.

The president was coming! So, apparently, was the rest of the world! Oh, the throngs and throngs that continually arrived! It of itself was a rare and never-to-be-forgotten novelty to those who had never in their lives before seen such a vast army of human beings gathered into a small space, and all perfectly quiet and correct, and even courteous in their deportment.

"Where are the drunken men?" said Marion, looking around curiously on the constantly increasing throng. "We always read of them as being in great crowds."

"Yes, and the people who swear," added Eurie. "I haven't heard an oath this morning, and I have roamed around everywhere. I must say Chautauqua will bear off the palm for getting together a most respectable-looking, well-behaved 'rabble!' That is what I overheard a sour-looking old gentleman, who doesn't approve of having a president — or of letting him come to a religious meeting, I don't know which — say would rush in to-day. It certainly is a remarkably orderly 'rush.' Girls, look at Dr. Vincent! I declare, Chautauqua has paid, just to watch him! He ought to be the president

himself. I mean to vote for him when female suffrage comes in. Or a king! Wouldn't he make a grand king? How he would enjoy ordering the subjects and enforcing his laws!"

"All of which he seems able to do now," Marion said. "I don't believe he would thank you for a vote. His realm is large enough, and he seems to have willing subjects."

"He has go-ahead-a-tive-ness." Eurie said. "What is the proper word for that, schoolma'am? Executive ability, that's it. Those are splendid words, and they ought to be added to his name. I tell you what, girls, I wish we could cut him up into seven men, and take him home with us. Seven first-class men made out of him and distributed through the towns about us would make a new order of things."

All this was being said while they were scrambling with the rest of the world down to the auditorium to secure seats, for the grand afternoon had arrived, and people had been advised to be "in their seats as soon after one o'clock as they could make it convenient."

"How soon will that be, I wonder?" Marion said, quoting this sentence from Dr. Vin-

cent's advice given in the morning, and holding up her watch to show that it was five minutes of one.

"It looks to me as though those deluded beings who arrive here at one o'clock will have several hours of patient waiting before they will make it convenient to secure seats. Just stand a minute, girls, and look! It is worth seeing. Away back, just as far as I can see, there is nothing but heads! The aisles are full, and space between the seats, and the office is full, and the people are just pouring down from the hill in a continuous stream. To look that way you wouldn't think that any had got down here yet!"

Now I really wish I had a photograph of that gathering of people to put right in here, on this page! Many of them would have looked much better at this point than they did after four hours of patient waiting. How that crowd did fidget and fix and change position, as far as it was possible to change, when there was not an inch of unoccupied space. How they talked and laughed and sang and grumbled and yawned, and sang again!

It *was* a tedious waiting. It had its irresistibly comic side. There were those among the Chautauqua girls who could see the comic side of things with very little trouble. The material out of which they made some of their fun might have appeared very meager to orderly, decorous people. But they made it.

What infinite sport they got out of the fidgety lady before them, who could not get herself and her three children seated to her mind! Those ladies who labored so industriously in order that the nation's flags, draping the stand, should float gracefully over the nation's chief, were an almost inexhaustible source of amusement to our girls.

"Look!" said Eurie, "that arrangement doesn't suit; some of the stars are hidden; see them twitch it; it will be down! Now that one has it looped just to her fancy. No! I declare, there it comes down again! The other one twitched it this time; they are not of the same mind. Girls, do look! It is fun to watch them; they work as though the interests of this meeting all turned on a right arrangement of that flag."

By this time the attention of the girls was engaged, and the number of witty remarks that were made at the expense of those flags would no doubt have disconcerted the earnest workers thereat could they have heard them.

The hours waned, and the president did not arrive. The waiters essayed to sing, but to lead such an army of people was a difficult task, especially when there was no one to lead. Such singing!

"We came out ahead, anyhow!" said Flossy, stopping to laugh.

Five or six thousand people had finished their verse, while five or six thousand in the rear were in the third line of it.

"We need Mr. Bliss or Mr. Sherwin or *somebody*," said Ruth. "What a pity that they have all gone, and Dr. Tourjée hasn't come! I thought he was to be here."

Presently came a singer to their rescue. The girls did not know who he was, but he led well, and the singing became decidedly enjoyable. Suddenly he disappeared, and they went back again into utter confusion. They stopped singing and began to grumble.

"Queer arrangements, anyhow," said a surly-looking man in front. "Why didn't they have a speaker ready to address this throng, instead of keeping us waiting here with nothing to entertain us?"

"I know it," said Marion, briskly addressing herself to her party. "Dr. Vincent has not used his accustomed foresight. He ought to have known that the presidential party would be three hours late, and filled up the programme with speeches, especially since there has been such a dearth of speech-making during the past wo weeks. We are really hungry for an address! I don't know who would have undertaken the task, however, unless they sent for Gabriel or some other celestial. I know *I* have no desire to listen to a common mortal."

Before them sat a lady absorbed in a book. During the singing she joined heartily, and when Dr. Vincent came, on one of his numerous journeys to try to encourage the crowd with the information that the party waited for had not yet arrived, she looked and listened with the rest, but always with her finger between the leaves, as if the place was too interesting to be lost.

Eurie's curiosity rose to such a pitch that she leaned forward for a peep at the title-page, and drew back suddenly. It was a copy of the Teacher's Bible!

A silence fell upon the company near the front, broken suddenly by an old lady who leaned lovingly toward her chubby-faced grandson, and said:

"Frankie, you must look in a few minutes and you will see the President of the United States."

"That is good news, anyhow," spoke forth a rough-looking, good-natured man near by, and the listeners, who were in that excited state of weariness and waiting that they were ready to laugh or cry as the slightest occasion offered, burst forth into roars of laughter, which rang back among the crowds behind and enticed them to join, though I suppose not twenty of the laughers knew what the joke was, if indeed there *was* one.

A sudden rush. Some one occupied the stand. A notice.

"A telegram!" said a ringing voice. "For Mrs. C. G. Hammond. Marked — 'Death!'"

A sympathetic murmur ran through the great company, as they moved and wedged and fell back, and did almost impossible things, to make a road out of that dense throng of humanity for the one to whom the president had suddenly become an insignificance.

Just then came the "Wyoming Trio." Blessings on them, whoever they are. Nothing ever could have fitted in more splendidly than they did just there and then. And the singing rested and helped them all.

Now a sensation came in the shape of a poem that had been written for the occasion, and was to be learned to sing in greeting to the president. How they rang those jubilant words through those old trees! Tender, touching words, with the Chautauqua key-note quivering all through them.

> "Greet him! Let the air around him
> Benedictions bear;
> Let the hearts of all the people
> Circle him with prayer."

"I wonder if he realizes what a blessed thing it is to be circled with prayer?" said she of the Teacher's Bible, turning a thoughtful face upon

the four girls who had attracted her attention.

"I wonder who Mary A. Lathbury is?" said Eurie, reading from the poem. "She is a poet, whoever she is. There isn't a line in this that is simply *rhyme*. I doubt if the president ever had such a rhythmical tribute as that."

"She is the lady with blue eyes and curls who designs the pictures in that charming child's paper which flutters around here. I have forgotten the name of it, but the pictures are little poems themselves."

This was Flossy's bit of information.

"Which designs them, the blue eyes or the curls?" Marion asked, gravely. And then these four simpletons burst into a merry laugh.

Still the president did not appear. The audience had exhausted their resources and their good humor. Ominous grumblings and cross faces began to predominate. Some darkly hinted that he was not coming at all, and that this was a design to draw the immense crowd together. Nobody believed it, but many were in a mood to pretend that they did.

"I never believed in this thing," said a tall, dark-faced, solemn-featured man, speaking in a

voice loud enough to interest the crowd in front. "This sensation business I don't believe in! What do we want of the president here! Who cares to see him? I don't like it; I believe it is all wrong, turning a religious meeting upside down for a sensation, and I told them so."

Our friend Marion, you will remember, was gifted with a clear voice and a saucy tongue.

"If he doesn't like it," she said, quickly, "and doesn't want to see the president, why do you suppose he has kept one of the best chairs for four mortal hours? Don't you think that is selfish?"

Which sentence caused ripples of laughter all about them, and quenched the solemn-visaged man.

But it was growing serious, this waiting. It was a great army of people to be kept at rest, and though they had been quiet and decorous enough thus far, it was not to be presumed that they were all people governed by nice shades of propriety. Would the disappointment break forth into any disagreeable demonstrations? Dr. Vincent had done what he could; he had appeared promptly on the arrival of dispatches, and given

the latest news that the telegraph and the telescope would send. But what can any mortal man do who has arranged for people to come who do not come, except wait for them with what patience he can command.

At this ominous moment he appeared before them again. Not a notice this time; something which shone in his eyes and quivered in every vein and rang in his trumpet-like voice. This was what he said.

CHAPTER XXX.

SETTLED QUESTIONS.

DEAR FRIENDS: I should bear a burden on my conscience, if I did not come to you to-day with the 'old, old story.'

"Over the tent which has been prepared for the President of the United States there glows, done in evergreen, this single word, '*rest*.'

"As I pass it, I am reminded of another and a different rest: the rest from every burden, every anxiety, every pain, every sin; who has rested in those everlasting arms? There is coming a day when all this throng of human life gathered here shall wait for the coming of the King. Yea, even the 'King of kings.' Should

that time be to-day, who is ready? Do you know his power? Do you know his grace? Do you know his love? Through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, every one of you may have that King for your father; I am commissioned, this day, to bring this invitation to each one of you; 'Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Will you come? * * * * Pardon this interruption — no, I will not ask your pardon: it is never an interruption to bring good news from the King to his subjects. I will not weary you with a long presentation; I have only this message: you are all invited to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved from every possible calamity; you are all invited to come now. I am going to ask the Tennesseeans to sing one of my favorites:

> "'Brother, don't stay away;
> For my Lord says there's room enough,
> Room enough in the heaven for you.'"

Never were tender words more tenderly sung! Never did they steal out upon the hearts of a more hushed and solemn audience. That match-

less word of gospel had touched home. There were those in the crowd who had never realized before that the invitation was for them.

Following the hymn came another, suggested also by Dr. Vincent: "Steal away to Jesus." It is one of the sweetest as well as one of the strangest of African melodies; and as the tender message floated up among the trees, a strange hush settled over the listeners; many tears were quietly wiped away from eyes unused to weeping.

"Now sing 'Almost persuaded,'" said Dr. Vincent, his own voice tremulous with his highly wrought feeling. Many voices took that up. Even the Chautauqua girls sang, all but Eurie With the sentence:

"Seems now some soul to say,
Go, spirit, go thy way;
Some more convenient day
On thee I'll call."

Flossy turned her anxious, appealing eyes on Eurie, but she was laughing merrily over the attempt of a feeble old man near her to join in the song, and Flossy whispered sadly to Ruth:

"Earie has not even as much interest as that."

The spell of the message and the music lingered, even after Dr. Vincent had gone again. There was no more grumbling; there was very little laughing; a subdued spirit seemed to brood over the great company.

"We could almost have a revival, right here," said one thoughtful man, looking with searching eyes, up and down the sea of faces.

"I tell you, no grander opportunity was ever more grandly improved than by those few words of Dr. Vincent's. They touched bottom. He will meet those words again with joy, or I am mistaken."

But the waiting was over; suddenly the Chautauqua bells began to peal; strains of martial music, and the roll of drums, mingled with the booming of cannon; and almost before they were aware, even after all their waiting, twenty thousand people stood face to face with their nation's chief.

"When the president's head appears above this platform, I hope it will thunder here," had been Dr. Vincent's suggestion several hours before.

Thunder! That was no comparison! I hope

even *he* was satisfied. Then how that song of greeting rung out; tender still, even in its power: "Let the hearts of all the people circle him with prayer." No better gift for him than that.

After the cheering and the singing, and the very brief speech from the president himself, came the address of welcome by Dr. Fowler of Chicago. His first sentence sent the multitude into another storm of cheers. Said he: "The work that I thought to do, has been done by twenty thousand people." How could they help doing it again after that? Chautauqua had not dropped her colors in this plan of an afternoon given to the president.

The address of welcome from first to last rang with the gospel invitation, "come;" no better word than that even for their chief; "honor to whom honor is due," quoted the speaker, and then followed his graceful tribute, but it closed with a tender, dignified, earnest appeal to the President of the United States to 'rest' in the same refuge, to enlist under the same flag, to be loyal to the same Chief, whom they were met to serve.

"Out of my heart," said he: "as a man who

recognizes God as the supreme ruler of us all, I bid you come with us, and we will do you good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

Poor Eurie! What a place she had chosen if she desired to hear no more preaching. What were all these exercises, but sermons, one after the other, strong warm unanswerable appeals to be loyal to the Great Chief? Certainly Dr. Deems was not the man to forget the Greater in his greeting to the under ruler; nor did he.

"Let me speak to you in closing," said he, "to you and to this assembly, out of my heart. We shall never all stand together again, until that great white throne shall stop in mid heavens, and we shall stand to meet the Chiefest of all chiefs. O men and brethren, shall we not all prepare to meet there? Mr. President, every day prayer is made for you; we are hoping to meet with you in heaven. Brave men who stood beside you in the late war, and have gone on ahead, are hoping to greet you there. May you have a good life, a happy life, a blessed life; and may other tongues more eloquent than mine, more eloquent than even my brother's who pre-

ceded me, bid you welcome one day to the general assembly of the first born. Amen and amen."

What could better close the matchless greetings than to have the Tennesseeans circle round their president and sing again that ringing chorus:

"I've been redeemed,
Been washed in the blood of the Lamb."

"I don't know what will become of the grumblers," Marion said as they rested in various stages of dishabille, and talked the exciting scenes over. "They have been shamefully left in the lurch; they were going to have this affair a demoralizing dissipation from first to last, unworthy of the spirit of Chautauqua. And if more solemn, or more searching, or more effective preaching could be crowded into an afternoon than has been done here, I should like to be shown how. What do you think of your choice of entertainments, Eurie? You thought it would be safe to attend the president's reception, you remember."

"I don't tell all I think," Eurie answered

and then she went out among the trees.

Truth to tell, Eurie had heard that from which she could not get away. Dr. Vincent's words were still sounding, "you are invited to come to Jesus and be saved; you are invited to come *now*." There had been nothing to dissipate that impression, everything to deepen it, and the thought that clung and repeated itself to her heart was that plaintive wail:

"Almost persuaded, now to believe."

That was certainly herself; she felt it, knew it; in the face of that knowledge think how solemn the words grew:

"Almost will not prevail,
Almost is but to fail;
Sad, sad that bitter wail,
Almost,—but lost!"

Was that for her, too? In short, Eurie out there alone, among the silent trees, felt and admitted this fact: that the time had actually come to her when this question must be decided, either for or against, and decided forever.

Sunday morning at Chautauqua! A white day. There can be none of all that throng who spent the 15th day of August, 1875, in that sacred place, who remember it without a thrill. A perfect day! Glorious and glowing sunshine everywhere; and beauty, such perfect beauty of lake and grove! The God of nature smiled lovingly on Chautauqua that morning.

Our girls seemed to think that the perfect day required perfection of attire, and it was noticeable that the taste of each settled on spotless white, without color or ornament, other than a spray of leaves and grasses, which one and another of them gathered almost without knowing it, and placed in belt or hair. Outward calm, but inward unrest, at least so far as some were concerned; Marion Wilbur among the number.

It was a very heavy heart that she carried that day. There was no unbelief; that demon was conquered. Instead there was an overpowering, terrible *certainty*. And now came Satan with the whole of her past life which had turned to sin before her, and hurled it on her poor shrinking shoulders, until she felt almost to faint beneath the load; she lay miserably on her bed,

and thought that she would not add to her burden by going to the service, that she knew already too much. But an appeal from Flossy to keep her company, as the others had gone, had the effect of changing her mind.

Armed each with a camp-chair, they made their way to the stand, after the great congregation were seated. A fortunate thought those camp-chairs had been; there was not a vacant seat anywhere.

Marion placed her chair out of sight both of stand and speaker, but within hearing, and gave herself up to her own troubled thoughts, until the opening exercises were concluded and the preacher announced his text: "The place that is called Calvary."

She roused a little and tried to determine whose voice it was, it had a familiar sound, but she could not be sure, and she tried to go back to the useless questionings of her own heart; but she could not. She could never be deaf to eloquence; whoever the speaker was, there was that in his very opening sentences which roused and held her. Whatever he had to say, whether or not it was anything that had to do with her,

she *must* listen. Still the wonderment existed as to which voice it was.

But when he reached the sentences: "Jump the ages! Come down here to Chautauqua Lake to-day, O Son of God! O Son of Man! O Son of Mary! When the prophet of old said, "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied," did he look along the centuries and see the gathered thousands here, who have just sung, 'Tell me the old, old story'? What story? Why, the story of the place that is called Calvary!"— Marion leaned forward and addressed the person next to her.

"Isn't that Dr. Deems?" she said.

"Yes indeed!" was the answer, spoken with enthusiasm.

And Marion drew back, and listened. That sermon! Marion tried to report it, but it was like trying to report the roll of the waves on the Atlantic; she could only listen with beating heart and flushing cheek. Presently she listened with a new interest, for the divisions of the subject were: "God's thought of sin," and "God's thought of mercy." Though the morning was warm, she shivered and drew her wrap

closer about her. "God's thought of sin! She was in a mood to comprehend in a measure what a fearful thought it might be.

"Some men," said the speaker, "make light of sin." Yes, she had done it herself. "Where shall we learn what God thinks of it? On Sinai? No. God spoke there in thunder and lightning, till the very *hills* shook and trembled.

"And what were they doing down below? Dancing around a golden calf! I tell you it is only at Calvary that we can learn God's idea of sin. For at Calvary, because of sin, God the Father surrendered his communion with God the Son, and on Calvary God *died!* Will God ever forgive sin? Many a one has carried that question around in his soul until it burned there."

Now you can imagine how Marion tried no more to write; thought no more about eloquence; this question, which had become to her the one terrible question of life, was being looked into.

"How will we find out? Go by science into nature, and there's no proof of it; God never forgives what seems to be the mistake of even a reptile!"

I cannot tell you about the rest of that sermon. I took no notes of it; my notes ended abruptly in the middle of a sentence; one cannot write out words that are piercing to their hearts. I doubt if even Marion Wilbur can give you any satisfactory account of the wording of the sentences. And yet Marion Wilbur rose up at its close, with cheeks aglow not only with tears, but smiles; and the question, 'Will God ever forgive sin?" she could answer.

There was a place where the burden would roll away. "At the place called Calvary." She knew it, believed it, felt it, — why should she not? She had been there in very deed, that summer morning. He had seen again of the travail of his soul, he was one soul nearer to being satisfied.

There were other matters of interest: those two Bibles, symbol of the Chautauqua pulse, — that were presented to the nation's highest officer; the address which accompanied them — simple, earnest gospel; the hymn they sang, — *everything* was full of interest. But Marion let it pass by her like the sound of music, and the words in her heart that kept time to it all were the closing words of that sermon:

"Here I could forever stay,
Sit and *sing* my life away.
This is more than life to me,
Lovely, mournful Calvary."

It was so, all day. She went to the afternoon service; she listened to Dr. Fowler's sermon, not as she had ever listened to one before; the sermon for the first time was for her. When people listen for *themselves*, there is a difference. She felt fed and strengthened; she joined in the singing as her voice had never joined before; they were singing about *her* Saviour. Then she went back to her tent.

"I am not going to-night," she said to the girls. "I am full, I want nothing more to-day.'

"Preached out, I declare!" said Eurie. "Are you going to write out your report for the paper? I wouldn't, Marion. I would go to the meeting. I am going."

"No," said Marion in answer to the question, and smiling at the thought. How strange it would seem to her to spend *this* Sabbath evening thus. How many had she so spent!

"I am glad to-morrow is the last day," she

said, sinking into a chair; "I want to go home."

And Flossy and Ruth looked at each other, and sighed. How well these girls understood one another! Why can't people be frank and speak so that they can be understood?

Suppose Marion had said: "No, I am *not* going to write my report, I am going to pray." Suppose she had said; "Yes, I want to go home *to practice.*"

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

IT is a troublesome fact that, even when people are very much interested, and very eager over important themes, commonplace and comparatively trivial duties, will intrude, and insist upon being done at that moment. For instance, our girls were obliged to spend the whole of Monday morning in packing their trunks and satchels, returning their furniture, settling for their tents, and the like; in short, breaking up housekeeping and getting ready to go back to the civilized world. Flossy and Ruth dispatched their part at the hotel promptly and

came over to the grounds to help the others. They discussed the meeting while they worked.

"If we hadn't been idiots," Marion said, "we should have attended that normal class and been graduating, this morning, instead of being down here, at work at our trunks and unknown to fame."

"Well, you wouldn't go," Ruth answered. "Don't you know you declared that was too much like work, and you hadn't an idea of learning anything?"

"Oh, yes," said Marion. "I remember a great many things I have said, that I would quite as soon forget."

By dint of eager bustling from one point to another, the work was accomplished by noon, and all the girls were ready for the afternoon service, which all seemed equally eager to attend. When they reached the stand they looked about them in surprise and dismay.

"Everybody is gone!" said Flossy, "only look! There are ever so many unoccupied seats!"

Marion laughed.

"And ever so many that are occupied," she

said. "My child, you have been so used to counting audiences by the thousands, that sixteen or seventeen hundred people look rather commonplace to you. However, there are more than that number here, I think."

It soon became a matter of small importance, whether there were few or many, so long as they had the good fortune to be there themselves, and to have the company of Dr. Eben Tourjée.

Now it so happened that among these four girls there were two to whom God had given special gifts: though neither of them had ever considered that there were such things as gifts from God, which they were bound to use in his service.

There was Ruth Erskine, who had capabilities for music in the ends of her fingers, that would have almost entranced the angels. What did she do with her talent? Almost nothing. She hated the sickly sentimentalities which, set to music, find their way into fashionable parlors by the score. She was not in the society that knew of, or craved, the higher, grander kind of music; and because she did, and did not know it, she

simply palled of the kind within her reach and let her gift lie waste.

Then there was Marion, whose voice was simply grand, both in power and tone. What had she done with her voice? Sung by the hour to the old father whose tender memory lingered with her to-day; less than nothing with it since; no one knew she could sing; she hated singing in school, she never went anywhere else; so only occasionally could the four walls of her upper back room have testified that there was a talent buried there.

Did Dr. Tourjée travel from Boston to Chautauqua for the purpose of inspiring and educating these two girls. I don't suppose he knew of their existence, but that makes no difference, they are working out his lecture all the same; in fact it is nearly a year since these Chautauqua girls came home, and if you have any sort of desire to know what Chautauqua theories develop into, when put to the test, please keep a sharp lookout for "*The Chautauqua Girls at Home.*"

As the familiar talk on music went on, Ruth, with her eyes aglow, began to plan in her own heart, first what she *might* do, and presently

what she *would* do. And Marion, at the other end of the seat, went through the same process, neither imagining that these same 'doings' would bring them together, and lead to endless other doings. But that is just the way in which life is going on every where, who imagined that what you did yesterday, would lead your neighbor to do what he *has* done to-day?

"Luther said: 'Next to theology, I place sacred music.'" This was the sentence that started a train of thought for Ruth. After that, she listened in order that she might work.

"Never use an interlude in church, I pray God that I may be forgiven for the fiddle-faddle that I have strummed on organs, in the name of interludes."

This, delighted Marion, she hated interludes. She hated quartette choirs. She had steadily refused to be beguiled into one, by the few who knew that she could sing, so, when Dr. Tourgée said: "Think of the grand old hymn, 'From all that dwell below the skies, let the Creator's praise arise,' being warbled by one voice, a grand chorus of four coming in on the third line!"

Marion was entirely in sympathy with him, and

eager for work in the way in which he pointed out. It was an enjoyable afternoon in every respect. But to "our girls" it was much more than that, it was an education. Every one of them got ideas which they were eager to put in practice; and they saw their ways clear to practise them to some purpose. When the service was over, and the audience moved away, a sense of sadness and lonliness began to creep over many, snatches of remark could be heard on all sides.

"Where is Dr. Fowler?"

"Gone: went this morning."

"Where is the Miller party?"

"Oh, they went some time ago."

"When did the president leave?"

"It's all about 'go,'" Eurie said: "Look! How they are crowding down to the boat; and only a stray one now and then coming up from there. Who would have supposed it could make us feel so forlorn? I am glad we are not to be at the morning meeting. I am not sure but I should cry of homesickness. I say, girls, let's go to Palestine."

Which suggestion was greeted with delight,

and they immediately went. A great many were of the same mind. Mr. Vanlennep in full Turkish dress, was leading the way, and giving his familiar lecture on the — to him — familiar spots. The girls stood near him by the sea of Galilee, and heard his tender farewell words, and his hope that they would all meet on the other side of Jordon. It was hard to keep back the quiet tears from falling.

They climbed Mount Hermon in silence, and looked over at Mount Lebanon, they came back by the way of Cesarea, and turned aside to take a last look at Joppa, down by the sea. In almost total silence this walk back was accomplished. What was the matter with them all?

Mr. Roberts had joined them, and he and Flossy walked on ahead. But their voices were subdued and their subject — to judge from their faces, *quieting*, to say the least. Then they all went to take their last supper at Chautauqua. Not one of them grumbled over anything. Indeed, they all agreed that the board had certainly improved very much during the last few days, and that it was really remarkable that such a throng of people could have been served so

promptly and courteously, and on the whole, so well, as had been done there. Still, it was strange to have plenty of elbow room, and to see the waiters moving leisurely up and down the long halls; no one in haste, no one kept waiting.

As they rose from table, a gentleman passed through; they had passed each other every day for a week; they had no idea what his name was, and I suppose he knew as little about them. But he paused before them:

"Good-bye," he said. And held out his hand, "I hope we shall all meet at the assembly up there!"

"Good-bye," they answered, and they shook hands. None of them smiled, none of them thought it strange; though they had never been introduced! It was the Chautauqua brotherhood of feeling. But after two weeks of experience and much practice in that line, it was impossible to rid onesself of the feeling that one must hurry down to the stand in order to secure seats; so they hurried, and had a new experience; they were among the first twenty on the ground.

"The audience will be utterly lost to-night

in this immense array of seats;" Flossy said in dismay. "Doesn't it feel forlorn?" But they took their seats, and presently came Miss Ryder and seated herself at the piano in the twilight, and the tunes she played were soft and tender and weird.

"Every note says 'goodbye,'" said Ruth, and she gave a little sigh. Presently, the calcium lights began to glow, as usual, and meantime though everybody was supposed to have left; still, the people came from somewhere; and at last, dismayed voices began to say:

"Why! Did you ever see the like! I thought we should surely get good seats to-night? Where *do* all the people come from."

"Look! Marion," said Eurie. "What would Dr. Harris think of such a congregation as this! They could not get into our church, could they?" But just then the hymn claimed attention:

"My days are gliding swiftly by."

How swiftly these days had glided away. How full they had been! During the prayer that followed, all heads bowed, and the silence that fell upon them made it seem that all hearts

joined. Dr. Vincent was the first speaker His manner and voice had changed. Both were subdued; he looked like a man who had been lifted up for a great mental strain and was gradually letting down again to earth.

"We are coming toward the close," he said. "We are more quiet than we have been here before. Familiar faces and forms that have moved in and out among these trees, for two weeks past, have gone. Only a few hours and we are going; only a few hours and utter silence will fall upon Chautauqua."

"Oh dear!" murmured Eurie, "why *will* he be so forlorn! I don't see why I need care so much! Who would have supposed I could!"

"Hush!" said Marion, and she surreptitiously wiped away a tear. "A love feast," Dr. Vincent said they were going to have, for that last evening; it was very much like that. The farewell from Canada came next; the speaker said he had been "thawed out," meant to have America annexed to Canada! Indeed they had already been annexed; in heart and soul! "Who's who?" said he, and "what's what? Who knows?" There was just enough of the

comical mixed with the pathetic in this address to steady many a tremulous heart.

Dr. Presbry followed in much the same strain, closing, though, with such a tender tribute to some who had been at the assembly the year before, and had since gone to join the assembly that never breaks up, that the tears came to the surface again. But those blessed Tennesseeans just at that point made the grounds ring with the chorus, "Oh jubilee! jubilee! the Christian religion is jubilee!" and followed it with: "I've been a long time in the house of God, and I ain't got weary yet."

By that time our girls looked at each other with faces on which tears and smiles struggled for the mastery.

"Shall we laugh, or cry?" whispered Eurie, and then they giggled outright. But they sobered instantly and sat upright, ready to listen, for the next one who appeared on the platform was Dr. Deems.

He, too, commenced as if the spell of the parting was upon him. "He was too tired," he said, "to make a short speech. Some one asked Walter Scott why he didn't put a certain book

of his into one volume instead of five. And he said he hadn't time. It took five weeks to prepare a speech three minutes long. And then he warmed, and grew with his subject until the beautiful thoughts fell around them like pearls. Not only beautiful, but searching.

"No man," said he, "*dares* to make a careless speech at Chautauqua, there are too many to treasure it up, to plant it again." Of course he knew nothing about those girls, and how much seed they were gathering which they meant to plant; but they gathered it, all the same. He dropped his seeds with lavish hand. This was one that took root in Marion's brain and heart:

"There are so many side influences that are unconscious, that the only safe way for one to do is to let no part of himself ravel, but to keep himself round and thorough, and healthy to the core."

After that, Marion's pencil, on which I have to depend for my notes, gave up in despair. "I *couldn't* keep track of that man!" she said, when I complained. "There was no more use to try than there would be to count these apple blos-

soms," for it was this spring, and we were standing in an apple orchard, and a perfect shower of the white, sweet-smelling things came fluttering round our heads. But after he 'calmed down a little,' as she called it, she tried to write again; and I copy this:

"Brethren: This meeting will convert some of the most thoughtful people of this generation: men who come here not knowing by personal experience the power of this thing, men who walk thoughtfully up and down these aisles, looking on, will say: 'There are scholars here, there are men of genius, of great brain power, there are men and women here of every variety of temperament, and attainment, held together for fourteen days by one common bond,' and the perseverance, the solemnity, the hilarity, the freedom, the naturalness, the earnestness of this meeting will so impress them that they will know that there is a miracle holding us, a supernatural strength. . . . . .

"May I give you to-night one word more of gospel invitation? Come, go with us, you who do not understand this matter for yourselves, go with us, and we *will* do you good. Will you go to your rooms to-night and make the resolve

that shall write your names in God's book of life? The recording angel has a trembling hand this minute, waiting for your answer. Weary one, *so* young and yet so tired, come, come, come now."

Marion, with cheeks burning, and eyes very bright and earnest, looked around her: Eurie sat next to her, she seemed unmoved, there was no sign of tears to her bright eyes, but she was looking steadily at the speaker.

"Never mind!" Marion said within herself, and there came to her an eager desire to begin her practice, to do something; what if it were utter failure, would the fault be hers?

Following the sudden leading that she had learned no better than to call 'impulse' she said in a quick low whisper: "Eurie, *won't you?*" And she held her breath for the answer, and could distinctly feel the beating of her own heart. Eurie turned great gray astonished eyes on her friend, and said in a firm quiet voice: "I have. I settled that matter on Saturday. Have you?"

And then those two girls, each with the wonderful surprise ringing music in her heart, were willing to have that meeting over.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

IT was almost over. Dr. Deems sat down amid the hush of hearts, and all the people seemed to feel that no more words were needed. Yet, the next moment, they greeted Frank Beard with joy, and prepared themselves with great satisfaction to listen to what he had to say. Frank Beard was one of Chautauqua's favorites.

People had not the least idea that they could be beguiled into laughter; hearts were too tender for that; yet you should have heard the bursts of mirth that rang there for the next five minutes! Frank Beard was so quaint, so original, so innocent in his originality, so pure and

high-toned, even in his fun, and they liked him so much that every heart there responded to his mirth. The roars of laughter reached as high as the music had done, but a little while before.

Yet, when people's hearts are tender, and full, it is strange how near laughter is to tears! Just a sentence from the same lips and the hush fell on them again.

Frank Beard had brought his heart with him to Chautauqua, and he was evidently leaving some of it there. The touching little story of his dream about his mother brought out a flutter of handkerchiefs, and made tear-stained faces. And when he, simply as a child, tenderly as a large-souled man, trustfully as only a Christian can, said his farewell, and told of his joyful hope of meeting them all in the eternal morning, absolute stillness settled over them.

So many last words — one and another came — just a word, just "good-bye," until we meet again; maybe here, next year, maybe *there*, where good-byes are never heard. Finally came Dr. Vincent, his strong decided voice breaking the spell, and helping them to realize that they were men and women with work to do:

"Now, my friends," he said, "we really *must* go home; it is hard to close; I know that, no one knows it better: we *have* closed a good many times, and it won't *stay* closed. The last word has been said over and over again. I said it myself, some time ago, and here I am again: we must just *stop*, never mind the closing; we will sing a hymn, and go away, and next year we will begin right here, where we left it."

But he didn't "stop," and no one wanted him to. His voice grew tender, and his words were solemn. The last words that he would ever speak to many a soul within sound of his voice; it could not be otherwise. You can imagine better than I could tell you what Dr. Vincent's message would be at such a time as that.

Breaking into it, came the shrill sound of the whistle. The Col. Phillips — the last boat for the night — was giving out its warning. The Chautauqua bells began their parting peal. Not even for his own convenience would that marvel of punctuality have the bells tarry a moment behind the hour appointed.

Our girls looked at each other and made signs, and nodded, and began to slip quietly out. They had arranged to spend the night at the Mayville

House, and take an early train. Many others were softly and reluctantly moving away. They were very quiet during that last walk down to the wharf. Glorious moonlight was abroad, and the water shone like a sheet of silver.

As they walked, the evening wind brought to them the notes of the last song which the throng at the stand were singing. A clear, ringing, yet tender farewell. It floated sweetly down to them, growing fainter and fainter as the distance lengthened, until, as they stepped on board the boat, they lost its sound. There were many people going the same way, but there was little talking. There are times when people, though they may be very far from unhappiness, have no desire to talk. Once on deck, Marion turned and clasped both of Eurie's hands.

"I have had such a blessed surprise to-night!" she said, with glowing face. "I did not think of such a thing! O Eurie, why didn't you tell me?"

"You cannot begin to be as surprised as I am," Eurie said. "I thought you were miles away from such a thing. Why didn't you tell *me*?"

Ruth and Flossy were leaning over, watching

the play of the water against the boat's side.

"What about those two?" Eurie said, nodding her head toward them.

Marion sighed.

"Ruth is very far from understanding anything about it," she said; "at least the last time I talked with her she knew as little about the Christian life as the veriest heathen so far at least as personal duty was concerned."

"When was that?"

"Why, a week ago; more than a week."

"How long is it since you settled this question for yourself?"

"Since yesterday," Marion said, blushing and laughing. "Eurie, you would do for a cross-questioner."

"And I have been on this side since Saturday," Eurie answered, significantly. "A great many things can happen in a week."

At this point, Ruth turned and came towards them. She looked quiet and grave.

"It is a year, isn't it? since we stood here together for the first time," she said. "At least I seem to have had a year of life and experience. Do you know, girls, I have something to tell

you: I thought to wait until we reached home, but I have decided to-night that I will not. I am sorry that I have not told you before. Marion, don't you know how like a simpleton I talked, a week ago last Saturday night? I want to tell you that I was a fool; and was talking about that of which I knew nothing at all. I want to assure you that there is a safe place, that I know it now by actual experience, I have gone to the mountain and it is sure and safe; and, oh, girls, I want you both to come so much."

"I know the mountain;" Marion said, reaching out, and clasping Ruth's hand. "The name of it is Calvary, it *is* safe, and it is sufficient for us all. Ruthie, we three are together in this thing."

What those girls said to each other then and there is sacred to them. But if I could, I would tell you something of the joy they felt.

Flossy still leaned over the railing, a small quiet speck in the moonlight. Marion kept turning her head in her direction. "Our poor little Flossy would not understand much about this experience, I suppose," she said at last;

"she is such a child, and yet, I don't know — sometimes I have fancied that she thinks more than we give her credit for. That at least she has lately."

"Let us tell her, anyway," Eurie, said, "we can't know what good it may do. If we had not been so dreadfully afraid of each other, during the last few days, we might have helped each other a good deal; for my part, I have learned a lesson on which I mean to practice."

Ruth looked up quickly, a rare smile in her eyes; she opened her lips to speak to them, then seemed to change her mind and raised her voice: "Flossy!" And Flossy came at her call.

"Come here," Ruth said, withdrawing her hand from Marion's, and winding her arm around the small figure beside her.

"Flossy, the girls have had our very experience all by themselves, and they want to know how long it is since you began to think about this matter for yourself."

Flossy turned her soft blue eyes on Marion.

"The very night we came, Marion, and you made me come to the meeting in the rain, you remember? I heard that which I knew would

never let me rest again, until I understood it, and had it for my own. But I was very ignorant, and foolish, and I blundered along in the dark for three mortal days! After that Jesus found me, and I have known since what it is to live in the light."

"A Christian experience of ten whole days!" Eurie said. Of course she was the first one to rise from her surprise and get possession of her tongue.

"Flossy, you have had a chance to get a good way ahead instead of being behind, as we thought. You will have to show us the way."

"Isn't this just wonderful!" broke forth Marion, suddenly, an overwhelming sense coming over her, of the new relations that they four would henceforth bear to each other. "Why, girls, what would they say up there at the stand, if they could know what has come to each of us! I almost feel like going back and telling them all. Just think what a delight it would be to Dr. Vincent, and Dr. Deems, and, oh, to all of them. Isn't it queer to think how well we know them all, and they are not aware of our existence?"

"I don't believe people will have to wait to be introduced to each other when they get to heaven," Eurie said; "that is one of the first things I am going to do when I get there; hunt up some of these Chautauqua people and cultivate their acquaintance."

This sentence gave Flossy a new thought: "We are really *all* going to heaven!"

She said it precisely as you might speak of a trip to Europe on which your heart had long been set.

"We are just as sure of it as though we were there this minute! Girls, don't you know how nice we thought it would be to be together at Chautauqua for two whole weeks? Now think of being together, there, for a million years!" But the thought which filled Flossy's heart with a sweet song of melody, and wreathed her face in glad smiles, was such an overwhelming one to Marion, so immense with power and possibility, that it seemed to her to take her very breath; she turned abruptly from the rest and walked to the vessel's side to still the throbbing of her heart.

Meantime the boat had been filling with pas-

sengers, and now she was getting under way. Still the hush continued; the people stood closely around the railing, on the Chautauqua side, and looked lovingly back at the fair point of land that lay before them in glowing moonlight. Presently a leading voice began to sing:

"There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar;
For the Father waits over the way
To prepare us a dwelling-place there.
We shall meet in the sweet by and by,
On that beautiful shore in the sweet by and by,
We shall meet on that beautiful shore."

Before the chorus was reached, every voice that could sing at all must have taken up the strain. Marion, for the first time in years gave a hint of the full compass of her powers, making Ruth turn suddenly towards her, with a brightening face, for she saw how the singing and the playing could fit into each other, and do good service.

On and on stole the vessel through the silver water. The courteous captain came around quietly for his tickets, and to one and another

with whose faces he had grown familiar he said: "We shall miss you; the Col. Phillips has been proud of carrying you all safely back and forth."

One said to him in return: "I hope, captain, we shall all land at last safe in the harbor." And the captain bowed his answer in silence. It would have been hard to speak words just then.

But ever and anon that leading voice took up words of song.

Still the song that best seemed to suit all hearts was that tender "By and by," and as the lights along the Chautauqua shore grew dim it rose again in swelling volume:

> "We shall meet, we shall sing, we shall reign,
> In the land where the saved never die;
> We shall rest free from sorrow and pain,
> Safe at home in the sweet by and by."

Then the refrain, repeated and re-repeated, until, as the last lingering note of it died away, the boat touched at the wharf, and looking back, they saw that the Chautauqua lights were out, and silence and darkness had Fairpoint.

"Good-bye," Marion said, and she bowed towards the distant shore; she was smiling, but her lips were quivering.

"We shall meet in the sweet by and by," Flossy quoted, but her voice trembled.

"There is a chance to do grand work first, that the final meeting may be infinitely larger, because of us."

This the leading voice in the singing said, as he held out his hand to say good-bye. And as they took it some of the girls noticed for the first time that it was Mr. Roberts; as for Flossy, she had known it all the time.

"We are going to try to do some of the work, Mr. Roberts," Eurie said; "I have found the road to Bethany since I saw you, the *real* road, and we are going to try and keep it well trodden."

He was shaking hands with Flossy, as Eurie spoke, and he still held her hand while he answered: "Good news! There is plenty of work to do. It is well that Chautauqua has gathered in new reapers I am coming to your city, next winter; I shall want to help you. Good-bye."

THE END.

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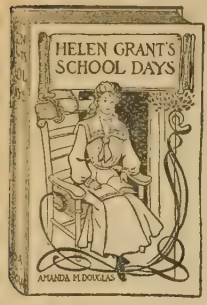

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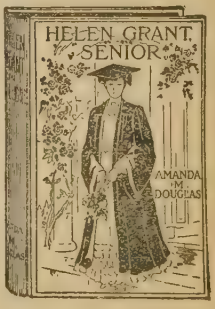

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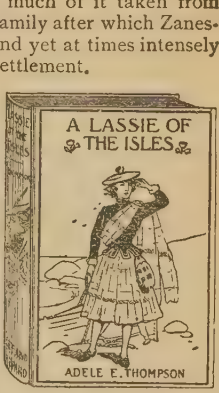

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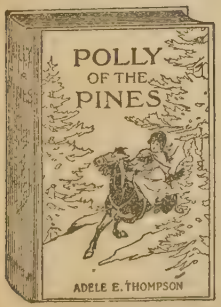

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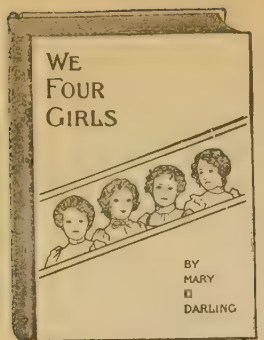

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